



LOVEMAKING IN A SPANISH TOWN

ROMANTIC SPAIN

THE LAND OF MANTILLAS
& MATADORS

By
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To

GINA AND MAY

In memory of the great adventure

**“When in thy dreaming
Moons like these shall shine again.”**

ROMANTIC SPAIN

CHAPTER I

MALAGA

THERE is a delightful old Spanish proverb which it is wise to learn before visiting the country : " Have patience, and the mulberry leaf will become satin."

A tiny story illustrates this admirably. Going to one of the frontier stations for a friend's arrival we saw the notice chalked up that the train was two hours late. After inspecting the church and wandering round the village in an icy wind for the prescribed two hours we returned to the station to find no sign of any train. The stationmaster, who regarded us with a pitying look, was approached. " Was the train then more than two hours late ?" " Mesdames, the train is seven hours late," he replied. " But why do you put up the notice that it is two hours late ?" " Ah that, Mesdames—that is to *give a little hope* !"

If you have the gift of leisure and of humour, Spain unfolds itself to you as a country of great charm and character, but there must be no question of rushing through it. That will only result in your emerging irritated, worried, and having seen only the surface of the country and the worst side of its people.

If you have patience your mulberry leaf will in-

deed become satin ; you will realise the graciousness and dignity of the Spanish character and will taste the full flavour of those delightful qualities. Indeed, in a few short weeks you will come to agree with the Spaniard himself that rush and hurry are undignified and, in Spain at least, will effectually prevent your seeing either country or people as they really are.

There is something absolutely antagonistic to the Spaniard in haste. He immediately becomes suspicious and closes up before us like a snail drawn into its shell. On the other hand, if he finds you "sympatico," he will tell you, in an artless and childish fashion, of his life, his thoughts and the customs of his country, which have changed very little for the last two hundred years. This statement absolutely holds true of the south, though in such towns as Madrid and Barcelona the poison of modernity has begun to work, and the restlessness of modern life has upset the national character and customs in such a way as to make those towns less interesting and less typically Spanish than any others.

It is well to understand that the beauty of Spain is of quite a different order to that of Italy, France or other countries justly famed for scenery. Indeed, many people would deny altogether that Spain is a beautiful country, and yet it has the most extraordinary and individual attraction which holds and fascinates far longer than mere natural loveliness.

The country could never be called pretty, possibly not even beautiful, but it has a grandeur and a magnificence which no other country possesses. The most terrible wind sweeps across the Central Plateau, a wind which makes even the

Spaniard himself shiver from head to foot and cover his mouth with his cloak in the characteristic attitude in which he is so often depicted.

But on these plains there is an extraordinary feeling of spaciousness; the shadows of great clouds move over them; there is an exhilaration and breadth of freedom in their vast solitudes and wide horizons, and the mountains which surround them are on a grand scale. No trees, no shrubs, but stained like a tapestry in rich and dark colouring.

The towns follow the same characteristics. No delicate tinting, no soft beauty, but pure outline of form, distinct and definite lines, massive and forbidding houses, sometimes almost terrifying in their austerity. The Moorish idea of beauty was to conceal it, and the Moors left many of their secrets in Spain. Even the finest houses in the old towns show but blank walls and barred windows outside, and it is only when the great gates are opened that one catches sight of the gay, flagged courtway within, with its orange trees, its oleander bushes, its dripping fountains and its carved and latticed verandas.

It is well, if possible, to start one's sojourn in the south, and it was my good fortune to begin with Malaga, a delightful centre from which to visit that most fascinating province of Andalusia. The popular story of how Andalusia got its name is amusing. Early explorers entering the province met a peasant indolently driving a mule over a pass; they begged him to tell them the name of this sunny and pleasant land, presumably in a language or dialect of which he understood never a word. He looked them over, silent and smiling in the usual Spanish fashion. Then turning to his

mule, called out : " Anda, Lucia," which simply meant " Go on, Lucia " ; but the strangers took it to be the name of the country, which they registered on their rough charts as Andalusia.

The Andalusian is the most pleasing Spanish type ; good-natured, smiling and imperturbable ; extraordinarily responsive to courtesy and quite impossible to hurry. I have a vivid recollection during my first visit to Spain of an illuminating episode. Crossing a road on to which the river had overflowed, we became uncertain whether we were on the road or in the actual river bed. An elderly Andalusian peasant on a mule came along, and repeated cries brought him to our side. He calmly rescued various small packages that were floating out of the car, placed them out of reach of the water and gravely asked ; " How can I serve you ? " But alas we " had no Spanish," or at least, such as we had became completely incoherent in the emergency. Meanwhile our polite attendant carefully lit a cigarette and sat waiting beside us on his mule while we feverishly turned over the pages of our Spanish phrase book, trying to find some sentence which would convey to him our anxious enquiry for the road. But who has ever found a sentence that one really needed in a foreign phrase book ? The imperturbable peasant sat for nearly twenty minutes, smoking cigarettes and occasionally rescuing a floating rug or a falling hat-box, till at length we found a sentence asking him the way. This, however, no one could make him understand, and we hopelessly realised that he only spoke patois. We showed him the phrase, but he shook his head ; he could not read. In despair we said the name of the village we were seeking slowly several times to him, whereupon a

light seemed to dawn. He turned his mule round, waving us to follow. With difficulty we backed the car till we could turn and slowly followed him. We had missed the proper road two turnings back, and the muleteer, still smiling and silent, accompanied us all the way, doubtless thinking, as our landlord put it later, that three foolish foreigners should not be left on the road alone.

Malaga is one of the most fascinating of the southern towns. The guide-book sums it up in a few words: "The capital of a province, the see of a bishop, and one of the oldest and most famous seaports on the Mediterranean." But Malaga has far more to it than that. It is one of those strange places—everyone knows some of them—which holds you by an indescribable charm of its own, bringing you back again and again. There is not a great deal to do there, once you have explored the old streets and wandered round the Arab town, but visitors who go for a few weeks stay the winter, and those who go for the winter stay for years. It was the Malaga of ancient days, and the Phoenicians considered its inhabitants knew better than any others on the Mediterranean how to salt fish. Vespasian made it a Roman municipium. Later it came under Byzantine rule; then the Visigoths took it in 571, and later the Arabs, when they conquered it in 711, extolled it as an earthly paradise, and their most celebrated rulers sang its praises in flowery language. There are still Moorish songs extolling its beauty. There is not much left of the Arab town itself, but traces of Moorish rule are over the whole city, particularly in its narrow calles or streets and in the houses with their enclosed courtyards and heavily barred windows.

After the final capture of the city by the Catholic

kings, in 1487, its historical interest seemed to leave it, and it settled down to the pleasure-loving, easy-going southern Spanish town, where "Mañana" seems to have replaced as a motto the arrogant "Tanto Monta" of Ferdinand and Isabella, and where life is so easy and pleasant that no one cares to do anything but sit in the sun and evade responsibility and action.

Malaga is the town *par excellence* to be lazy in. I, an energetic northerner, became so demoralised with indolence after four short weeks that I would have been quite content never to leave it. I lived in a Spanish hotel in the Cathedral Square, and it was delicious to drift sleepily on to the balcony in the morning for the early chocolate, sweet and thick, stirred with a stick of cinnamon and, sipping it slowly, watch the life of the town begin. It had in reality begun long before with the wildest of bell music, a music that rings in one's ears in Malaga all day and far into the night. For Malaga is a city of cathedrals and churches, of mules and goats, and they all carry bells. The deep-toned bell of the cathedral boomed out for early service, answered by the jangling bells of all the other churches, all trying to keep time and all jangling in their chimes, as do the bells of southern towns.

They had hardly died away when the silver tinkle of the goats' bells began and whole herds of brown velvet goats trooped into the square on their way to the hills outside the town, where they spent the day grazing. I loved to watch them from my balcony, stopping at their own special houses in the square, where the fat, smiling, Andalusian maids came down with earthenware pots for the daily supply of milk. The goats

never seemed to make a mistake. Each went of her own accord to the special door she knew and waited till the goatherd had come along and milked her and then lay down quietly till the herd was ready to move on all together. This was quite early in the morning, about seven o'clock, and the herd would be gone by seven twenty. Then came the mules, some with farm produce from the hills or vegetables from the innumerable market gardens outside the town, some with great baskets of fruit going to the quays, and the very smartly caparisoned mules with carriages going to their stands. All were heavily belled and all tossed their heads with joy to make the bells ring, and I am quite certain each mule tried to make more noise with his bells than any other. Most of them stopped to drink at the fountain in the centre of the square and the air simply vibrated with bell music round that fountain.

On a fiesta (and four days out of five are fiestas in Malaga) a quaint little procession would come out of the bishop's palace on one side of the square and walk across to the great doors of the cathedral. This consisted of two or more priests and half a dozen acolytes, escorting his grace the bishop across to a special service. The bishop, in purple robes and costly lace, two acolytes holding his train, the rest carrying candles and incense, and the priests with books and birettas, made a delicious flash of colour in the old square. Such little rogues those acolytes, swinging the incense censer under the very nose of a mule, drawn aside to let the little procession pass, or trying to evade the priest's eye and exchange a joke with some boyish friend watching the procession cross the square! On one terrible occasion I saw one of the

acolytes actually filch an orange from a mule's basket as he passed it, the kneeling muleteer being busy with his prayers on the offside, but the priest caught him, boxed his ears soundly and sent him back to the palace in disgrace, while the little crowd of onlookers laughed at the sacrilegious but very human little episode.

About eight thirty all the quay traffic begins to drift up to the square and centre round the fountain there. Malaga is still famous for its fish, though it does not salt it nowadays, and huge rush baskets of fish come up on their way to the market. Among the best are the salmonetes, a kind of trout, the calamares, and most famous of all, the boquerones, a species of sardines, eaten every day by the true Malaguen, who considers his meal incomplete without them. The boquerones seller carries his two flat rush baskets on long ropes slung from his elbows, placing his hands on his hips to prevent the rope slipping, and the baskets of silvery fish hang to within a foot of the ground. He is a typical and attractive figure in his white trousers, coloured blouse and cap and brilliant hued sash. He calls his fish in a very musical though rather shrill cry of five notes, a cry said to have come down from Moorish times.

Meanwhile there is always a great coming and going about the main doors of the cathedral. All the devout townswomen go in for a few minutes on their way to market, their black mantillas and shawls forming a striking contrast to the garb of the peasant women, who wear full skirts, coloured bodices and bright handkerchiefs or small shawls over their heads. All the market women say a prayer on their way to the market, elsewise their goods won't sell.



ANCHOVY SELLER IN MALAGA

The cathedral itself is not of absorbing interest. It stands on the site of the Moorish mosque, and was partly destroyed in 1680 by an earthquake. One tower has never been completed, and tradition has it that it never can be completely finished. If it is left to the citizens of Malaga to do it, it most certainly never will. At a particular time in the year the highest stars of the Southern Cross can be seen from the cathedral tower, the only place in Europe from where they are visible. The inside is rather more interesting, for there is a fine old silleria, of which the carved seats were made in 1658 from designs by the celebrated artists, Luis Ortiz and Guiseppe Michele.

The fifteen chapels have little interest, except that in one is the old carved statue of the Virgin of the Victories, that strange wooden figure which the Catholic kings carried about with them whenever they went to war and set up on a special altar next the royal tent. Whenever this figure was with them they won the battle, so naturally the Catholic kings refused to move without her, and borrowed her from the cathedral, giving her a special title, "Our Lady of the Victories."

One hears a great deal about the Catholic kings in Spain. Streets and market-places are called after them; chapels built to them and shops dedicated to them. It took me some time to realise that this title did not comprise all the Catholic sovereigns of Spain, but was simply a title assumed by Ferdinand and Isabella, who took with it the famous motto "Tanto Monta" from "Tanto Monta Fernando como Isabel," referring to the equal rights of their respective crowns of Aragon and Castile, which is now an accepted

Spanish saying, meaning "one is as good as another" !

After ten o'clock it is too hot to sit on the balcony, even under the striped awnings, and then it is delightful to wander up into the narrow and high old streets. Amongst the many things the Moors taught the Spanish people during their occupation one was that the sun in his glory is not a friend but an enemy, who must be kept out of the houses certainly, and even out of the streets if possible ! Malaga always reminds me of a huge and high cake cut in many pieces by a sharp knife. These cuts are the dark streets, so high and narrow that one can shake hands across the street from the top storey balconies, and that only slanting rays of sunshine get into the street itself. There are, of course, several fine modern streets such as the famous Calle del Marques de Larios and the Alameda, the latter a boulevard of which Malaga is extremely proud. It is a quarter of a mile long and very broad, and is planted with fine plane trees. It has the making of a magnificent avenue, though at present its pavement is mud and much resembles a battlefield, but the Calle del Marques de Larios is really a fine street, beautifully paved and with excellent shops, including clubs and cafés, outside which the members and customers sit at tiny tables set on the pavement, drinking coffee or chocolate and commenting on the passers-by. No one must feel offended at these comments if they understand them, for although they sound strange to a northern ear they are not meant rudely at all but as real compliments. When a pretty girl passes the men look at her gravely, touch their hats and generally say, " God bless your mother."

Often on a fiesta gypsies come in from the hills

and dance on the pavement in front of the tables, and I have seen some fine dancing in the streets of Malaga. But it is the narrow old calles or lanes in the towns that are most interesting. The people of Spain all live in the open; the shop windows are movable and are often taken out, so that one sees right into the interior and can look at the family life going on behind the open shop front. The wares are laid out most attractively in little patterns and arabesques on the pavement itself. No one seems to mind having to move off on to the road to prevent spoiling the patterns. The bargaining that goes on is unending, but there is always plenty of time. If you don't come to terms to-day you will perhaps to-morrow, or if not "It is God's will that another should have it," as a cheery market woman told me when I assured her I could not afford her price.

One of the most delightful things in Spain is its strange eastern music, and of all the music by far the most magical is the Malagüena. This is a plaintive little song or chant which is hummed under the breath, started by one, taken up and varied a little by another, carried right down the street like a thread of melody, everyone singing a few bars. Sometimes it is the veriest whisper, sometimes it rises to a wailing chant. It is quite bewildering, for you cannot place it; it often seems to die away altogether and begin again as a sort of echo, but with different harmonies and intervals, and always in a minor key. The narrow streets of Malaga are full of this strange ghostly music, and the women washing clothes in the river bed all hum it, each one improvising as she goes on, but it always stops suddenly if it is noticed that any stranger is listening.

The only time one hears the Malagüena openly sung is in the religious processions during Holy Week. The singer before the carried shrines starts some well-known harmony, which is taken up by one person in the crowd after another and continues as long as the sacred images are standing. Immediately the procession moves on it stops, to recommence at the new halt. These strange eastern chants are heard in the narrow streets of every southern town in Spain. They come from balconies, barred windows, or the people walking in the street itself. One never knows who is singing or just where the song is coming from.

The market in Malaga lies to the north of the Alameda, and was an old Arab arsenal. It has the two Moorish arches as principal entrance and the celebrated Moorish motto, "There is no conqueror save God" between shields above, but, unlike the usual Spanish town, the market is not one of the great features in Malaga. Here the quays take its place and are infinitely more fascinating. The harbour is magnificent, and there is always some excitement going on. Some of the big warships of the Mediterranean fleets or a huge ocean liner, yachts and smaller craft innumerable, including all the strange vessels over from Africa, mysterious looking boats which one strongly suspects of gun-running or of some illicit smuggling, besides crowds of coasting steamers. The different quays and wharves were an unending joy to me, more especially as they were approached by a fine park with avenues of palms, mimosa and roses, where strange little Spanish children like dolls played in the sand and old Spanish dance music was well rendered by the town band. It was *the* thing to go down and watch the big

coasting steamers. I have spent hours watching them loaded ; casks of oranges, drums of essence of attar of roses, for which Malaga is famous, casks of wine and oil, and late in the summer all those lovely tropical fruits which the town grows to export—melons, almonds, pomegranates, bananas, prickly pears, custard apples and Japanese med-lars. In addition to these, figs, sugar-cane and cotton all grow in the fertile plain which lies to the west of the town. The children in the streets suck sugar-cane all day. You see them drawing it in long strings through their teeth, the fineness and whiteness of which are a tribute to this habit.

The East Mole with the lighthouse stretches far out on one side of the harbour, and you may either watch the large steamers berthed on the inside or climb over the rocks on the outside and watch the kingfishers fishing in the sea from the stones, a sight I have seen nowhere else. I sat one sunny morning watching a pair fishing, who seemed just as much at home on the rocky shore with the waves rolling in as they would have been in the secluded reach of a quiet river.

Coming back from the Mole over the quays and through the park you can go up the narrow streets behind the cathedral to the Alcazaba. This old Moorish city, which was the site of the earliest Phœnician settlement, is now mostly inhabited by gypsies and is practically in ruins, although the arch and tower, dating from the Moorish occupation, are still recognisable. The Alcazaba is connected with the fortified hill called the Gibralfaro (from *pharo* a lighthouse and *gebel* a hill), and has been used as a fort since the thirteenth century. It commands a superb view of the whole city and harbour and of the magnificent range of Sierra

Nevada mountains at the back, which shelter the town from the very cold winds. At the foot of the Gibralfaro is the bull-ring, and along the coast eastwards lies the delightful suburb of Caleta, with charming gardens running down to the water's edge. Farther out is the old Moorish Castillo de Santa Catalina, a ruin on a hilltop, from whence you see perhaps the most wonderful sunsets in Europe. Hedges of geraniums grow wild on these hills; asphodel, oleander and the bee orchids are found in great profusion.

All along the coast of the little fishing village of Palo you may see the boquerones boats come in and the huge nets full of glittering fish are drawn up the shore by the singing fishermen in exactly the same way as it was done in the days of the Phoenicians.

To the west of Malaga lies that fertile plain known as the Vega or Hoya of Malaga, partly reclaimed land of incredible fertility, and it is here that the vegetation is tropical and luxuriant. Lucern has been mown seven times in the year, and the rest of the crops are in proportion. It is as fertile a district as the Huerta at Valencia, which is accounted the most fertile soil in all Europe.

Out on this plain are delightful walks with shady trees, old Moorish wells and tiny farms where one can rest and refresh oneself. The people are peculiarly courteous, responding to a greeting in the usual dignified Spanish fashion. When you have learned to treat the beggar as your equal and call him brother he will talk to you of olden days in that naïve and childish fashion which is one of the great charms of the Spanish people. Begging is a registered calling, by no

means looked down upon, and each beggar has his own beat. A few kindly words ; " Pray excuse me in God's name, brother, from giving," and you will be no longer molested, for beggars seldom forget a face. I was on excellent terms with all the beggars who sat on the cathedral steps, having arranged with one to give him so much a week as long as I was in the town, on condition that no one else bothered me. The arrangement was made known apparently all over the town, for I was never begged from and always greeted by my friends on the cathedral steps when I went out in the morning. " You have no parasol with you, Señora, and the sun will be hot later," they would say ; or " Cover your mouth, my sister, in the name of God, for the terral blows to-day." The dry terral, a kind of mistral from the north-west, is the only wind really dreaded in Malaga. The vendaral, or south-west wind, is damp and cold in winter, but in spring and summer is refreshing and cool, while the levante, or east wind, is not feared at all.

Anything can be done with Spanish people by courtesy, and the poorest person in the street will leave whatever he is doing to take you to your destination, should you but ask him the way ; but beware of offering money to one who has done you a service, for it would hurt and disturb him greatly. Your interest in his town and your courteous thanks are his ample reward. I remember a picnic in the Venta Gardens, on the hills behind the town, where the women came to watch us lay the picnic table. " Let us give them some of the pies or the sandwiches," was suggested, but our Spanish friend forbade such a thing at once. " You cannot do it like that," he

said ; " they will be terribly offended." Going up to the eldest woman in the group he lifted his hat and said, " This food is a specialty of the city ; it is doubtless not nearly as good as yours, but would it interest you to taste it," upon which it was graciously accepted, and fruit and wine pressed upon us in return.

Here, too, a typical little incident occurred. One of the party, anxious to air his Spanish, asked a little boy his name, and the answer came at once ; " Juan, para servir a Dios y a Usted " (John, to serve God and you).

The church in Malaga which I found most interesting and went many times to see was the Church of El Cristo de la Victoria. It stands where the tent of Ferdinand the Catholic stood during the great siege of Malaga, in 1487. In commemoration of his victory this church was founded and it was greatly hoped that the famous statue of the wooden Virgin would rest here, but the cathedral claimed it, so other figures were given, and gradually the church has acquired a wonderful collection of statues of Our Lady. Many of these are clothed in natural robes of wool or damask and the realistic effect is extraordinary. The church itself is old, built of brick washed a soft chrome yellow, with strange little alcoves like tiny chapels built out and roofed with yellow glass. In these various alcoves stand the statues with the light falling on them from above and the air just moving the sombre drapery of the robes. Most of the figures are of life-size, with beautifully carved face and hands painted in natural tints, and it is hard to believe that they are not alive and will presently come down from the alcoves and join with the worshippers. The most arresting of

these figures is draped in robes of soft black wool, and has a wonderful face, anguished and yet smiling—a strange, wan smile that brings tears to the eyes. You realise that the sword has indeed pierced her heart, and looking more closely at the draped figure one discerns the hilt of the sword at the left side, the only proof positive you have that it is not a living woman. Other statues here are draped with damask and hung with jewels, but it is this sad and lovely face that lives in the memory and makes the Church of the Victories an unforgettable place.

All through Spain the churches have a remarkable atmosphere of quiet and aloofness from the world. At first I thought it was the darkness, for they are all dark; or perhaps their great height, for they are very lofty, but soon I came to believe that it was the intense devotion of centuries which had created this vibrating and mystical atmosphere. They are hot with the fervent prayers of generations of devout people. Even now the peasant women absorb themselves in prayer in a manner unknown to northerners. In the early mornings they kneel on the steps before some favourite altar and you literally cannot disturb them. They are engrossed in their devotions and oblivious to all going on around them. It may well be that places on which such emotion has been lavished are different from all others.

CHAPTER II

CORDOBA

Cordoba is to me like a city in a trance ; it is not dead, for its narrow, clean streets and its whitewashed houses, with their balconies bright with flowers, shew no sign of decay, but it is very silent, and, excepting in the central streets, one meets comparatively few people about.

It is a town of memories, for few cities have made history as has Cordoba ; now it sits silently guarding the great treasure lying in its very heart—the mosque—and dreaming of past glories, waiting, maybe, for their return.

It was Gautier, I think, who made the pertinent remark that a whitewashed wall built yesterday was impossible to distinguish from a whitewashed wall built centuries ago ; and so Cordoba has by no means the appearance of what it really is, one of the very oldest of Spanish towns. Indeed, it does not look Spanish at all, but essentially Eastern. It lies in the wide brown Cordoban plain, a cluster of low, flat-roofed white houses crowded round the mosque, with a few palms and branches of some dark and glossy-leaved tree appearing above the roofs. In the distance across the plain are the snow-capped heights of the Sierra Morena ; nearer are the mountains of Cordoba, a final spur of the great Sierra, and below the city flows the broad yellow Guadalquivir, with its ruined Moorish mills and its long bridge with the great tower.

Those who cannot dream dreams or see visions had better not go to Cordoba. They will only find a dull little place with terrible cobblestones (though it was the first city to be paved in Europe !) and narrow streets like a maze surrounding a temple built to rival the famous mosque of Mecca. They will *hate* the dust blowing in from the plain and the glaring sun on the white walls will make their eyes ache and their heads heavy. But those whom the Gods have gifted with imagination will reconstruct the glorious Cordoba of the past. They will be able to visualise proud Roman senators in its streets, and see the fighting legions of Cæsar and Pompey outside its walls. It was one of the strongholds under Gothic rule and strange Visigoth warriors have gone out from there to battle. Later on it was the flower and crown of the Moors in Spain, and it only requires very little dreaming to see that !

Even under Roman rule Cordoba had been famous. Silius Italicus mentions the city in his poem on the Second Punic War ; the two Senecas both lived here. It became a city of great wealth and importance and was one of the three capitals of Baetica. The Romans developed the province in their usual manner ; they built roads, towns and bridges, and the great bridge at Cordoba to-day with its fine Moorish arches was built on the Roman foundations of an earlier bridge. In those days Roman galleys rowed up the river as far as Cordoba, for the Romans well understood the importance of waterways, but now the river has silted up ; for centuries the sand-banks fell in and nothing was done to clear it, and to-day vessels get no higher than Seville. The Guadalquivir is now a wide but shallow stream, running sluggishly

through the great plain and only fills its banks when the snows melt on the Sierras, and the little tributaries rush turbulently into it. It is a strange tawny colour, fitting perfectly into the browns and greys of the plain. In the final Roman struggle for supremacy between Cæsar and Pompey, a great part of which was fought out in Spain, Cordoba allied itself to Pompey's fortunes, with the result that Cæsar's legions occupied it and treated the inhabitants very harshly. As the Roman rule in Spain declined and the country was left defenceless the Visigoths swarmed over it and made Cordoba one of their headquarters. They called it Kordobah, and we know that two of their kings, at least, made it their royal residence—Euric, first king of Gothic line, and Roderick, the last Visigoth king to rule, for when it was taken from them by the Berbers great treasure was looted, and history tells of wonderful robes embroidered with gold and silver, chains of precious metals, and bracelets and girdles studded with rubies, pearls and emeralds.

But it was at the time of the Moors that Cordoba attained its greatest glory, and, indeed, to appreciate Spain properly, one must study thoroughly the Moorish occupation. Many Spaniards say that Spain has been ruined by the priests, and it is strange to reflect that the Moors first came to Spain by the invitation of an ancient Bishop of Seville, who appealed to the Berbers to come and help him to drive the degenerate Gothic kings and their arrogant nobles out of the town and province of Cordoba.

The province then covered almost all the part of Spain we now know as Andalusia, and was well cultivated, well watered, and the most fertile part

of the whole country. The Visigoths, who were fighting people, became degenerate and effete in this fat land, oppressed the people and took all the revenues. The celebrated Berber chief Tarik answered the bishop's call, and brought seven thousand wild Berbers across from Africa. They marched on Cordoba, and a fierce battle raged for three days on the banks of the river, the bishop and his troops assisting in the fight, and the Visigoths were completely routed. Then a strange thing happened. The wretched Cordobans and the many Jews living there had been as greatly oppressed by the Church from Seville as by their own Visigoth kings and welcomed the Berbers with open arms, led them into the city by secret ways and utterly refused to have anything to say to the astonished bishop, who found himself no nearer a solution of how to appropriate the fat lands of Cordoba for the Church, for the Berbers settled down comfortably in their new quarters and could not be evicted. Worse still was to follow, as the Berbers were merely the monkeys who drew the chestnuts out of the fire for a cleverer power. They had recently become Mohammedans under their masters, the Arabs, and when the latter saw the rich plum that had fallen to their vassals' share, they quickly despatched an Arab army from Damascus, established a Caliphate in Cordoba and drove the Berbers back to Africa. Thus began the Moorish occupation in Spain, which gradually extended over the whole southern part of the country. The Church militant in Seville was aghast at the havoc wrought, but had little time for vain regrets, as they were soon occupied with the defence of their own city.

Cordoba and its fair lands did not remain long under the Caliphate of Damascus. A great massacre there almost wiped out one of the greatest Arab families, the Omaiyyades, but one member of the family escaped, and fled to Spain, vowing vengeance against the Eastern Caliphate. This was the famous Emir Abder-Rahman I., who came to Cordoba, where he made war against the Emir Yusuf and vanquished him. Abder-Rahman then established himself and his household at Cordoba, proclaiming it a caliphate of its own with Cordoba town as capital and himself as caliph and severing it completely from the Eastern Caliphate. Then began the golden rule, for Abder-Rahman was the typical caliph we recognise from the stories of the *Arabian Nights*. He loved splendour, pomp and circumstance: he doted on magnificent robes, lovely ladies and sparkling jewels. Moreover, he had a perfect passion for palaces, and no house was too gorgeous for his family. He also had a craze for building, and he began at once to construct all sorts of wonderful buildings in Cordoba. He raised one palace after another till there was a Palace of Pleasure, a Palace of Flowers, a Palace of Lovers and his own special Palace of Damascus down by the river banks, where he lived. His grandson inherited this craze, for he built the most wonderful palace of all; said to be the largest and most gorgeous habitation ever built by man, but more of that anon.

When Abder-Rahman I. got tired of building palaces he built the famous mosque, or mezquita, as it is always called; at least he started to build it, but his son and grandson both added so considerably to it that the mosque when finished was very much larger than Abder-Rahman's original

designs. Most truly the building mania ran through the blood of all the Omayyades! If the famous caliph built gorgeous palaces they were as nothing to his mosque: here he let his imagination have full play. It was to be the great shrine and centre of the faithful in Spain—it was to divert the stream of pilgrims from Mecca to Cordoba, it was to rival in size the great mosque of Kairwan in Fez, and it was secretly meant to eclipse the great mosque at Mecca itself. Practically it did all these things, and is still the finest monument of Arab architecture in Spain, whilst in size it is amongst the largest mosques of all Islam.

No description of this famous building can give more than the vaguest idea of its charm. Pictured in words, it sounds strange and eccentric, while in reality the effect is completely harmonious and of great beauty.

This is enhanced by its entrance from a rather dingy street with dull houses on one side and a high blank wall on the other. One enters by a small door under the muezzin tower and is suddenly in the beautiful Court of the Oranges called by Abder-Rahman the Court of the Ablutions, for it is part of his building. This is one of the loveliest courts in all Spain, and runs right along one side of the mosque, some 570 feet in length. It has five fountains, groves of ancient orange trees, some fine Asiatic palms, stone colonnades, old steps and seats where the faithful lingered and rested before performing their ablutions and entering the mosque. On the side of the mosque are nineteen arches, which originally were open, so that one walked right in from the court, the avenues of orange trees continuing inside as columns of marble or porphyry—an endless and

wonderful perspective. Now the arches are walled up, forming a closed wall to the mosque and one enters by the Puerta de las Palmas.

Inside the mosque one is overwhelmed by the unusual effect of a forest in stone. There are 860 columns (though Contreras tells us that there were once as many as 1419), upholding double arches coloured in red and white stone, and these columns are arranged in aisles, all leading to the sacred Moslem centre, the mihrab or prayer recess. It must have been a wonderful vista in Moorish days, to look right down these aisles, out into the courtyard itself and see the columns changing, as it were, from stone and marble to living trees in the sunny courtyard. The columns were said to be brought from many places, from old Roman temples, from ruins of Carthage, even from Constantinople itself, but I am told they came mostly from Andalusian quarries and were specially hewn for the mosque. They are all different, but not sufficiently so to spoil the symmetry. Some are of porphyry, some of jasper, the majority of marble and stone. Some are plain in design, some fluted and some carved. The arches which they support are all double, the lower arch being in shape the true Moorish horseshoe, the upper arch rising a pure half-circle from imposts springing from the centre of the columns. The arches themselves are all of red and white stone, and this vivid colouring gives a virility and brightness, as well as a delicious uniformity, through the whole mosque. Originally each of the nineteen aisles had a different timber ceiling, and there was a wonderful open-work carved roof, painted in blue, red and gold, which cannot be seen, as the whole mosque was roofed-in about 1713. We are told that in Moorish



THE MOSQUE IN CORDOBA

days 7425 lamps hung from this roof, and as the decorations were of the richest description the effect must have been extraordinary. Gold, silver, copper, brass, ivory and jasper were used in these decorations; the most marvellous mosaics and tiles were designed and the wooden carvings held together with golden nails. The Moors had a delicious tradition that Allah gave them special living colours for their tiles—blue from the heaven, yellow from the sun, green from the foliage and crimson from the heart of the rose. Certain it is that while the Moorish tiles, fired 1200 years ago, retain the pure brilliance of their colouring to the present day, the tiles made now fade and the colours become dull in fifty years!

The great gem of the mosque was the first mihrab built by Abder-Rahman I. Its walls were of pure gold with decorations of mosaic shewing texts from the Koran. The extraordinary blue of some of this mosaic makes one wonder if the Moors were not possessed truly of some divine secret in colour-making, for it looks like tiny pieces of the blue sky let in—a vivid, living colour. A second mihrab was built by Abder-Rahman II., but this was partly destroyed when the cathedral was built; but the third mihrab, constructed by the third Abder-Rahman, was the most wonderful of all, and is still considered one of the great marvels of Moorish art. The vestibule ushering us into this gem has a dome in the shape of a pineapple and arches, taken probably from an older mihrab, resting on marble columns.

The mihrab itself is a wonderful little chamber, some thirteen feet in diameter. The walls are of mosaic, for which the Greek emperor of Constantinople sent special workmen, and the ceiling is a

single block of marble, hollowed out as a shell. By some strange and lovely Arab device it is tinted very faintly a rose-colour, and its perfection must be seen to be appreciated.

The faithful Moslem went round this chamber on his knees, going round seven times, his face turned towards Mecca, and the floor is worn by the knees of devoted pilgrims.

Of the great treasures of the mosque none now remain, but we know that sacred carpets and rugs decorated it, gaily striped silk was hung from its arches, perfumed oil burned in its lamps and its pulpit was a great treasure, composed of thirty five thousand pieces of wood, held together by golden nails and studded with jewels. Of the woods which composed it, ebony, sandalwood, bakum and aloe were only a few. The copy of the Koran kept here was wrapped in cloth of gold, sewn with pearls and rubies, and had a special covering of crimson silk. When one becomes bewildered with the richness of the colouring, the intricacies of the mosaic and the fretwork of the open panelling inside the mosque it is well to go and sit in the courtyard to rest. Here a great peace dwells, and visitors drift back here day after day. It is spacious and still, the only sound the orange leaves falling into the fountain basins and the pigeons who nest in the high muezzin tower cooing and making love. Piles of golden fruit lie under the orange trees, and children come in and play round the fountains, but in the dreamy, tranced fashion that seems to obtain in Cordoba. Black-robed women come in too, going to the fountain for water. They hold the Moorish water-pots on their heads with one slender arm uplifted ; they fill their water-pots and go out again through

a narrow stone door leading to the street, almost like shadows, so quietly and silently do they move.

A lovely and entirely believable story has it that some few years ago some members from one of the Moorish embassies visited the mosque. They looked in, saw the forest of pillars and came back to the court to remove their shoes and perform the ablutions of the feet before entering the sacred building. If the heart of Cordoba is the mosque, the soul of the mosque dwells in the Court of the Oranges, which even the Catholic kings have been unable to spoil, though they began the downfall of the mosque. When Ferdinand captured the city in 1236 it was re-consecrated as a Catholic cathedral, though but little change was made in its structure. In 1523 its bishop obtained an order from Charles V. to build a completely new cathedral in the very centre of the mosque, and in spite of the horrified protests of the inhabitants of Cordoba this was actually carried out. One is glad to think that the Emperor regretted to his dying day having allowed this priceless record of Moorish art to be despoiled. He is said to have addressed the cathedral chapter, on visiting Cordoba after completion of the cathedral, in the following words: "You have built what you or others might have built anywhere, but you have destroyed something which was unique in the world." Fortunately, on entering the mosque to-day the forest of pillars does not permit the central church to be seen. One must advance to the centre before one realises the full incongruity of the spoliation!

Nothing is left of the gorgeous palace and town of Az-Zahra, built by the third Abder-Rahman, and not even its exact site is known, though it

is believed to have been about three miles out of the town. Various stories are told of its origin, some recounting how it was built to please a favourite of the Caliph An-Nasir (the third Abder-Rahman), while others tell us that he built it as a memento to his chief wife. It certainly was enormous, as it had accommodation for six thousand women, three thousand seven hundred eunuchs and two thousand guards. History tells us it took ten thousand men forty years to build ; that its walls were of precious metals, scented woods and brilliant mosaics, and that the centre of the ceiling of the Hall of Ceremonies was formed of a huge pearl sent as a present from the Emperor Constantinos. It had enchanted gardens, beside which the hanging gardens of Babylon were as a wild field. It had bowers of roses, arbours of orange and acacia and avenues of palms and pomegranates. Its fountains were of silver and porphyry, and played music. Water was carried to each chamber in silver pipes ; in short, it was one of the palaces we recognise from the Tales of the Thousand and One Nights.

A column of fine alabaster or a vase of terracotta dug up in the environs of Cordoba thrill the inhabitants every now and then with the hope that the long lost palace ruins have at length been discovered, but it has always proved a myth ! Everyone who goes to Cordoba nowadays goes across the famous Moorish bridge, with its sixteen fine arches ; but how many pause to realise the romance of that bridge ! All sorts of strange vehicles have passed over it, from the chariots and war-horses of the Moors, rushing out to do battle on the river bank, to the purple silk litters which carried the bishops of Seville when they came to

pay State visits or negotiate for land with the Moorish caliphs. To-day a constant stream passes over it. Mules with coloured trappings, heavily laden from the plain ; donkeys in long lines, also heavily laden, with crimson balls and tassels on their bridles and cloaked men, riding in from the hills, holding their thick blanket capes across their mouths in the usual Spanish fashion. Across the bridge from the town, at the other end, stands the great tower called the Calahorra, a watch tower which guarded the entrance to bridge and town, from which point begins the main road to Seville. From this end of the bridge one has a fine view of Cordoba and also of the Moorish water-mills, now in ruins, and rising out of the river parallel to the bridge itself.

All down the river banks, if one strolls along in the evening, are thickets and clumps of bushes from which the song of the nightingales pours forth in a continuous stream of melody. They begin to sing quite early in the evening in Spain. Starting from the town and walking a few miles down the river banks, one is never out of sound of their song. On the south side of the old Alcazar is a delicious old garden with fine trees—eucalyptus, palms, acacia and many fruit trees. The Alcazar was supposed to be that Palace of Damascus built by the first caliph, and had spacious chambers and baths, courtyards and towers decorated with tiles and mosaic. It was patched up and mended in the time of the Catholic kings, but is now in ruins and forms one of the favourite walks, and the view over the plain to the distant Sierra is strangely arresting. Cordoba takes on extraordinary colouring towards evening—browns and purples, every shade of yellow, and the

dazzling white walls with an occasional green-tiled roof make for very vivid contrasts against the clear sky. The sunsets are equally remarkable. The sky is generally cloudless, but at sunset clouds invariably appear,—huge dark brown or purple masses, in shape like those great white clouds which the Italians call *cumuli*. I have never seen such strange clouds. Sunset is the only time when the river seems clear, and probably that is the reflection of the lights in the sky. It lies like a broad glittering ribbon, laid in folds across the plain.

It was at Cordoba that we introduced to our Spanish host the idea of moonlight picnics. At first he thought it an absurd idea, but very soon he liked it almost as much as we did, and found charming places to drive and ride to—old villas on the near hills and bridle paths across the plain to some little vineyard where we could rest the mules and view the broad undulating plain in moonlight.

Starlight as it shines over the Cordoban plain is a revelation to a northerner ; the stars seem much larger and nearer the earth, and there is some unusual visibility in the atmosphere which enables one to see quite long distances at night. Once a strange and thrilling event happened which I am glad to have seen. Part of the great rolling plain outside Cordoba is one of the special portions of the country set aside for the estancias where the fighting bulls are bred and reared. These are huge enclosures, many miles in size, and no one goes into the enclosures but the keepers. A few days before any of the great bull-fights the bulls are driven at dead of night along the high road to the town. They come tearing along, headed by a picador, who has to be careful to keep his distance

(and incidentally his seat, for should he fall he would never rise again). The peasants come out of their villages to watch the great beasts pass, all crowding up on the sides of the road and keeping far back to avoid danger. The bulls are accompanied by horsemen and running peons or keepers with their stone slings. They were past in a second, raising a cloud of dust and looking three times their size, as everything does at night. It was a terrifying moment, and the earth seemed literally to shake with the thunder of their hoofs as they passed. The bulls start, I am told, at a gentle trot, and the terrific gallop is only reached as they get near to the town and realise that they are being driven.

Cordoba used to be famous for its leather work, and was the headquarters of a very powerful guild or company of leather-workers, whose apprentices were bound by most rigid rules and regulations, but the trade gradually stopped, and it is difficult to find any specimens of the old work now ; the fine chair covers, screens and saddles of olden days seem to have vanished. Saddles, it is true, are still made, but are stitched now and not tooled in gold or stamped with arabesques as in bygone times.

CHAPTER III

ON THE ANDALUSIAN PLAINS

In early spring the road between Corboda and Seville is at its loveliest, for it runs through part of the plain not yet scorched and burnt with the sun and full of flowers. That is the brief but lovely time when the plains of Andalusia blossom as does the rose. First comes the little blue iris, and I have seen fields covered with them,—blue as the sea. Then comes the asphodel, that strange flower of which nothing is really pretty but its name. Its delicate bell-like flowers come when the stalk is already almost a dry stick and its few leaves are shrivelling up. Spring bursts upon Andalusia in a night, and then there are many other flowers “which paint the plain from God’s palette,” as the people say—vetches in all colours: violet, red, yellow and pink; delicious little convolvuli like stars, great patches of campion and that wonderful night-scented stock, with its insidious and unforgettable faint perfume. There are huge clumps of montbretia and clusters of heath, which grows to a great height, sometimes as tall as four or five feet, and scents the whole countryside with the smell of honey. I loved the blue and white salvias. “Flowers of Our Lady” the children call them, and one constantly sees them in bunches before a wayside shrine. Everything seems bursting into flower all at once, and even the villages are scented with orange flowers and the waxen blossoms of the

magnolia, which grows to great perfection in Andalusia. But the scent always associated with Spanish peasant life to me is that of the clove carnation. All southern people love carnations, and the Spaniard adores them. You see them growing in boxes, old tins, anything that will hold them, from almost every balcony in a village, and the young dandies of the countryside wear one behind their ears whenever there is a fiesta or they go courting. There is a delicious little wild pink that grows on the plain, which is, I suppose, the progenitor of all the tribe, and it has, too, that faint odour of clove which characterises the family.

All this vivid and fresh beauty lasts, alas ! but two or three weeks, then the plain begins to scorch up, and everything is finished but the flowering grasses, the heath and those low rock roses that grow in the shelter of the hillside or under the shadow of a river bank. The shrilling of grasshoppers and the hum of bees and the quivering heat above the burnt grass proclaim the end of the all too short spring, and huge yellow melon flowers in the village gardens get covered with dust and their leaves look quite grey instead of green. Oh ! the dust on those plains and its strange power of penetrating through wood and iron trunks and hat boxes, as easily apparently as through the thickest of double veils ! One swirls along in such clouds of dust that one can scarcely see the country at all ; past patient, plodding oxen, finely decorated mules and horses, which shew their old Arab strain in the way they hold their heads and their short stocky necks, as well as in their speed. Having seen a short impromptu race between these little animals, I understand perfectly how the Arabs

were described as "scouring the desert." Once on the grass these horses simply put their heads up and literally *flew* along, something as different from the pounding gallop of an ordinary hunter as from one of our finest racers. The horse with Arab strain in it has an air of lightness and freedom when going full pace which is unmistakable. He tosses his head, his mane and tail flow out, one sees he is in his element at the gallop, and no one could possibly imagine him trotting.

The Spaniard is a fine horseman, but I should greatly question his love for horses. He takes care of them, as they are valuable property, and, understanding the points of a horse and appreciating the comfort of riding a horse finely bred, he sees to it that his horses are the best procurable, but as to loving them and making friends with them he would laugh at the idea !

Nevertheless, the peasant sits his horse, or his mule, as though one with it. The fact is he has lived on horseback most of his life, and it is a perfectly natural mode of locomotion to him. One sees all sorts of feats of horsemanship in the country villages. The men come in from the hills or the far off estancia on horseback, their women-folk riding with them, not on a pillion, but seated in front of the man, who puts his arms round his wife, guiding the rein with either hand and looking over her shoulder. In addition to the double burden, the horse or mule often carries a couple of sacks of vegetables, corn or oranges as well, but does not seem to mind the weight. All animals in Spain go very heavily laden, and one does not realise how much a donkey can carry till one meets a line of these patient little beasts carrying double baskets of stone up a steep

mountain road to mend a bridge or build a house.

Motoring from Cordoba to Seville we had a misadventure. It was early in April and the weather perfect, the plain in great beauty and the road "not too bad," as even our pessimistic chauffeur acknowledged. But about halfway one of those inexplicable events occurred that take hours to discover what is actually wrong and still longer hours to remedy. Naturally this did not take place near a village or town, nor even was there a venta in sight. We wandered up and down, the sun set and the frogs began to croak in the marsh behind the road ditch and we began to think of spending the night under the "belle etoile" when a passing peasant managed to tell us of a "casa" two leagues away. I know these two Spanish leagues! You start in the morning for a point just two leagues distant. You ride all day, and in the evening are still just two leagues distant from your objective. So we smiled and thanked him and remained where we were. But the thought occurred, just as he was proceeding, that we had no food. Lunch we had eaten and our expected dinner was waiting in Seville! Was it really only two leagues? If the Señor would mount that small mound he would see it behind the clump of trees! The Señor mounted, and saw a far off glimmering light, to which we betook ourselves, the chauffeur more pessimistic than ever and only leaving his car under enforced commands and with the promise it should be guarded till the morning. "What a country, what a country," we heard him remarking as we all stumbled along the dark road. Certainly not two leagues off we found the light, and it shone from a house that looked as though

one day, long ago, it had been a prosperous venta. Repeated knockings at last brought an answer. A fat, harassed-looking woman opened the door and looked with astonishment at the little processon. She excused herself ; it was quite impossible—two ladies and two gentlemen—she had no food and no one there—she could not possibly take us in—also (in a burst of pride) her first grandson had been born that morning and she was very very busy ! We looked at each other in dismay. By this time it was pitch dark and we were two miles away from the abandoned car ! But the Señor was suddenly inspired ; he told her, in halting Spanish, that it would surely bring ill luck to the newcomer if strangers were turned from his house the very night of his arrival ; who knew—"What in the world is the Spanish for 'Angels unawares,'?" he asked, turning to us breathlessly.

Of course no one knew the Spanish for such a thing ! our grammar only gave such things as the verbs "to dance" and "to love," or translations of phrases one would never under any condition be likely to want. However, perhaps the peasant who guided us knew about angels unawares, for he suddenly came to life. After a hurried talk he informed us that she would give us her living room and we could sleep under a roof, at least, but she could only offer us cheese and bread. "I myself will go a little farther and get you a bottle of wine, Señores, and find someone to watch the car."

We went into a strangely foreign-looking but spotlessly clean kitchen—the living room of the house—floor of red stones, shelves with pots of the native earthenware crockery, heavy old wood settees and a smouldering wood fire on the open

hearth. We had scarcely unwound our motor veils when a great clattering of hoofs outside and the door burst open. A dark handsome lad and an elderly man appeared. "Strangers in my house on the night of my grandson's birth—a lucky omen." The elder man took off his sombrero and saluted us. "You shall have all I can give you, Señores," he continued, "but I fear it is very little." But strange things materialized; whether they had been there before or whether the peasant who brought us fetched them we never knew, but in an hour we were sitting down to an excellent meal,—chicken with rice and saffron, goat's cheese and butter, the excellent but rather heavy wine of the country, a kind of sherry, with figs and oranges and dried raisins as dessert. After the meal was over the peasant and his son consented to sit down with us—nothing would induce them to join us at the meal itself—and drank the second bottle of wine with us—"To the health of the newly born," and we all drank, including the peasant, who arrived with a wild-looking youth, who, he said, would guard the car all night. "Tell him if he *touches* it it will explode," our poor chauffeur pleaded.

As the evening went on we heard many stories of the district. The family owned five olive trees, and an olive tree is a gold mine to the industrious peasant. The olive harvest is in the winter months, and all the relations come to help with the harvest. Asked where they slept, he was dumb-founded. "But in the loft, of course," he said. "I have a fine loft, Señores, with fresh hay and dried heather for burning. All day we work at the trees and at night we sit in the courtyard and talk and soon we are sleepy, for it is hard work.

Everyone sleeps soundly, and we get to work early and rest in the middle of the day." When they went out to fodder the mules for the night we were taken up to see "the newly born," a dark, olive-skinned baby, with one of the typical fat, smiling, good-tempered Andalusian girls for his mother. She was interested to see us ; it had evidently gone round at once that our arrival was of good omen on the night of her son's birth. She lay in the huge old wooden bed, the family bed in which her husband was born, her son had seen the light, and his son, doubtless, in the dim future would also be ushered into the world. Two great wooden presses testified to the prosperity of this old peasant family, the modern note being struck by a very common gilt looking-glass, which rested on one of them, a possession of the young wife. When we came down again everything was cleared away and the mistress of the house, though she must have been worn out, was anxious to talk. She shewed us her few treasures, including a really magnificent shawl "her mother's mother's."

"And do you ever wear it?" we asked.

"I wore it for my daughter's wedding," she said, "and once when I went to a corrida as a bride."

Strange, simple soul, who wears her great treasure but twice in her life ! "It will be my daughter's when I am gone," she said, carefully folding it away.

I shall never forget waking up next morning in that old inn. We were given the room upstairs next to the "newly born," a room with the same old wooden chests, cupboards, and an enormous bed, undoubtedly the *cama de matrimonio* of the

elder couple, who protested they could not use it, the woman being occupied with her daughter and the "newly born" and the man spending the night in the living room, recounting his life and adventures, as I heard afterwards, to "los Señores."

A door opened on to the usual wooden balcony, and this I threw open before going to bed. Quite early, about four o'clock, I was wakened by a shrill, clear piping; a strange note I had never heard before, but which seemed familiar. I lay sleepily listening to it, and wondering what it could be. No solution offered itself, so I got up, and slipping on my fur coat, stepped out on to the balcony.

The beauty of the scene almost took my breath away; the dawn had not yet broken, and the whole plain lay before me, shimmering in the early morning light. Gone were all the reds and browns and yellows of the plain in daylight: it was a world of grey and silver, clear, transparent, with wisps of scarf-like mist laid across it and gleams of shining white where the light caught the river. A few shadowy trees, like the ghosts of trees, rose up here and there as sentinels, and far off I caught sight of a goatherd leading his flock right into the distant sea of mist and piping in a clear high note a plaintive little melody. It was, indeed, scarcely a melody, just five or six notes, repeated over and over again, which, I was told later, was an ancient Moorish goat call. Somehow it reminded me extraordinarily of the desert, and looking out from one's tent in the very early morning, one almost expected to see tents and hear camels' bells! It seemed to me that the early days of the world must have been like that, clean, fresh and unspoilt, and I stood entranced while the high

piping note of the goatherd died away into the distance and his flock faded into the mist like the dark shadow of a cloud upon the ground. Then suddenly the plain awakened to life and light and colour ; the rosy peaks of the distant Sierra stood out as the sun's rays touched them—splashes of blue and pink spangled with dew, as if caught in a net of diamonds shone on the plain, as the sun rose gloriously and shone on patches of hepatica and beds of blue iris ; the scarves of grey mist vanished and the whole plain was suffused with sunlight. That sunrise was far more wonderful than any sunset ; the whole joyous awakening of the vast plain to a new day. We had bowls of goat's milk and some of the native Spanish bread for breakfast ; that bread baked in pale coloured twisted loaves which we used to call " Holy Family bread," because it was always painted by Murillo in his pictures of the Holy Family. It is the same bread the Spaniards have eaten for centuries, the crust very hard and the inside soft and doughy. It can scarcely be cut, but must be broken, and strangers to the country either like it very much or hate it. In the towns French bread can always be obtained, but in the country there is no other bread than this.

The chauffeur had spent the early hours of the morning on the car, and we were soon ready to start, quite reluctant to leave our kind hosts, who had given us of their best with the usual Spanish courtesy and dignity, and who utterly refused to be paid for it, but who permitted us to leave a *porte bonheur* for the " newly born."

All the way down to Seville we were entertained by tales of the district with which the men of our party had been regaled during the entire night, apparently by the olive grower and his son-in-law !

Andalusia is a most superstitious spot ; everything has a meaning and then a double meaning, and an omen and portent as well ! The spirits of the Moors haunt Andalusia, it is believed, partly because so much of their blood was spilt there and is still in the ground, and partly because they hope to have it back ! This last statement had been received with incredulous laughter, but the olive grower was quite firm. " It is the truth I am telling you, Señores," he had said. " Arabs still come across from Africa to visit the ruins of their great mosque, and they always pray that Andalusia may be theirs again ! Doubtless the Señor knows," he went on, " of the great earth spirits ? They live particularly where many battles have been fought and much blood has fed the earth. The soil of this land has been watered with blood for centuries, and those who fell here come back. Anyone with some of the old blood in their veins can see them ; I myself have seen the Moorish chiefs on their swift horses, charging across the plain on summer nights, when it is never quite dark. You can see their robes, and the long manes and tails of their horses flying behind them."

I understood well how this could be imagined, remembering the scarves of grey mist I had seen floating over the plain early that morning.

The olive grower had many more fascinating Andalusian stories and legends : he had told of the juniper bushes, nailed up over the door to prevent evil spirits from entering.

" I always hang them over my stables, to protect the horses and mules," he said, " for the Arabs greatly love swift horses, and if they can get in, they make the horse go mad, and then he

dies, and the Arabs get him !” Then he recounted the tale of the lamp, burning pure olive oil, which is always placed by a baby’s cradle—the child must never be left alone without a lamp burning—then no spirit can harm it, but the oil must be the pure oil of the olive ; no other will do. Young babies are believed to see the angels, and when they smile they are doing so !

Some of the most charming superstitions are about oil and wine, which the peasants bracket together as husband and wife, the strong, full-bodied wine being the husband, and the suave, sweet oil the wife. Fine wine comes from the vineyards of Andalusia, the hills behind Cordoba being famous for a certain brand, but it won’t carry, and so cannot be exported, “ which is natural,” the olive grower said ; “ the man does not like to leave his native country.”

There are hundreds of legends about wine. In far distant vineyards in Andalusia and Granada the women often tread the winepress with the men, and while lovers will make sweet wine, husband and wife treading it together will make it sour. (A significant belief, this !) Another amusing saying tells that if the mistress of the inn is a shrew the wine will ferment in half the usual time. A few drops of new wine, squeezed into a baby’s mouth, will give him the “ wine head,” i.e. he will be able to drink as much as he likes without ever getting drunk ; a delightfully pagan belief this, in a country where they still time the boiling of their eggs by paternosters ; two paternosters for a very lightly boiled egg, three paternosters for a well set egg, and five for a hard boiled egg ! A delightful cooking recipe puts a taste of wine into the mouths of birds and fishes about to be cooked. It is

supposed to bring out the full flavour and make them mellow.

About oil there are even more remarkable beliefs, for olive trees are even more valuable property in Andalusia than vineyards. Here one must remark that oil as the Spaniard knows it is a very different thing from any imported oil. Pure oil should be perfectly tasteless, and if it has the very slightest taste the native connoisseur immediately pronounces it bad. Oil will not keep sweet in the house of an ill-tempered or suspicious person, and, above all, oil must never touch cork ; that turns it rancid at once. In Spain one notices how all the casks of oil have wooden stoppers covered with linen. This is done, too, with the huge drums of essence, the priceless attar of roses, of orange flowers of southern Spain. Oil smeared regularly on the face of a baby girl will give her that lovely golden skin which never freckles, so admired and coveted by the Spanish woman, and which she so often possesses. Oil, indeed, is the great lubricator of life to the peasant in Spain—he cooks his beans in it, and makes his omelette in it and fries his fish in it whenever he can get it. When he cannot get it he is poor indeed !

Some of the strongest beliefs are about herbs, shrubs and trees, many of which are very quaint. Rosemary is always used for great festivities. When burnt, its extraordinary fragrance forms a kind of incense and is used in many private chapels. It used to be gilded and its spikes presented on a silver dish to sovereigns and distinguished princes of the Church when visiting a town. Andalusians believe it was the bush on which the Virgin stretched the Holy Child's baby garments to dry in the sun, and it is, therefore, " of blessed memory."

Bay leaves flavour many dishes, and are said to take any poison out of game or meat and render them harmless. Vine leaves wrapped round small birds before they are roasted impart a peculiar flavour greatly appreciated by the Spanish epicure, but the favourite flavouring of all is saffron, which ranks with garlic in the peasant's kitchen ; and certainly the peasant way of cooking chicken—with rice and saffron—is a revelation. There are saffron cakes and a delicious saffron sweetmeat which brings out this peculiar flavouring to perfection.

Evergreen trees are allowed to keep their leaves all the year round because they sheltered the Virgin and Child on the flight into Egypt ; and yew branches, if placed inside a coffin, will prevent decay. The Spaniard has a great admiration for all trees ; possibly because in his windy plains and rugged Sierras he has all too few, for Spain is no land of forests, or even woods.

Here is a notice we found nailed up against a fine tree in one of the parks in Seville.

To the Wayfarer

“Ye who pass by and would raise your hand
against me,
Hearken ere you harm me !
I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter
nights,
The friendly shade screening you from the
summer sun.
My fruits are refreshing draughts,
Quenching your thirst as you journey on.

I am the beam that holds your house,
The board of your table,
The bed on which you lie,
And the timber that builds your boat.
I am the handle of your hoe,
The door of your homestead,
The wood of your cradle,
And the shell of your coffin.
I am the bread of kindness, and the flower of
beauty,
Ye who pass by, listen to my prayer : harm me
not."

CHAPTER IV

SEVILLE

If Malaga is a city to be lazy in, and Cordoba is a town of dreams, Seville is certainly a city of pleasure. It would seem that it were made for pleasure; that joy and gaiety were its natural gifts. It has a delicious climate, a superb position, and the great natural beauty of the town itself, with its delicious parks and gardens, all adds to this feeling. But there is something more than even all this. Some special quality in the sun, the air, the sky, gives that strange thrill and zest in life which one is conscious of occasionally in very fine and exhilarating weather,—that is daily bread in Seville; one is simply glad to be alive there!

The Sevillians have the gift of enjoyment, it seems to me, more than any people I have ever known, and it is a quite natural, innocent enjoyment, a spontaneous *joie de vivre* which is unmistakable. A few days in the town, and it has got into your own blood; you become suddenly aware that you are enjoying quite ordinary things,—the blue sky, the sunshine, the roses in the gardens, the lovely parks where all Seville spends its afternoons. I suppose business is sometimes done in Seville, but I have never seen anybody doing any; people in the shops serve you, it is true, but in a lackadaisical fashion, talking to each other meanwhile—about last night's new dancing troupe, the

coming bull-fight, the procession from the cathedral, politics, music ; anything but business.

Seville is said to have seven hundred streets, and every one of them has a distinguishing characteristic of its own. Most of them are tiny narrow streets where wheeled traffic is entirely forbidden, though donkeys and mules may pass through. The older houses shew blank walls, the windows, if any, being heavily barred on the ground floor, but through the large iron entrance gates one gets a glimpse of the patio round which the house is built, gay with flowers and fresh with running water, generally a fountain in the centre of the courtyard or on one of the walls. Tubs of deep crimson oleanders, orange trees, enormous geraniums reaching right up the sides of the walls and roses everywhere, decorate these delightful patios, which have the floor (and often the walls too) made of the celebrated azulejos or coloured tiles for which the south of Spain is famous.

The most celebrated street is the famous Calle de las Sierpes, little more than a narrow lane, and yet holding the best shops, clubs, banks, and many cafés. This is one of the streets where no wheeled traffic may pass ; indeed, it hardly could, so very narrow is it, and so tortuous its windings. It gets its name from the old House of the Serpents, at the end, but it might equally well have had it from its serpentine curves. When this *calle* is roofed in with the awning drawn right across it in summer it is more like one of the streets in an eastern bazaar full of laughing, cheery people. One sees many shawls worn here, many roses in the hair, and in summer there is an unending flicker of fans. The cafés in the Sierpes set their chairs and tables right across the pavement, and often it is literally im-

possible to pass ; one has to thread one's way between the chairs. Here one often sees the bull-fighters, with their flashing diamond studs and rings, worn even when not in full costume, and their plait turned up under the hat, drinking their coffee and chatting with their followers and admirers. Here come the dandies of the town, and, indeed, all the men of Seville, who seem to have endless leisure to sit all day, drinking coffee or aguardiente, smoking ceaseless cigarettes, criticising all who pass in audible tones, and discussing the news of the day. There is no better place in which to study Spanish town life than in these cafés on the Sierpes, and here one learns to distinguish the true Andalusian types.

The Sevillian is thin, with well-cut features, an olive-coloured complexion and very closely cropped hair, trimmed to a point in the centre of the forehead and either shaved round the ears in points on the cheek or shewing the ghost or shadow of a whisker. Otherwise, all the men are clean-shaven and have rather stern, closely shut mouths, which never even open when they smile ; the corners relax ever so slightly, that is all. The immobility of the face is remarkable, especially the way in which they look at you gravely, staring for quite a long time, not rudely, but just with that interest and curiosity which belongs to people who have nothing to do and endless leisure to study passing life. One realises the unusual character of these faces when watching masses of people at a dancing hall ; they watch intently, silently, till the whole dance is finished, and then their eyes smile, and they move their heads slightly with a slight gesture of approbation. The only place where the Spaniard really lets go, in facial emotion

at least, is at a bull-fight, and there they seem absolutely unable to keep their emotion and excitement out of their faces! The Spanish face becomes, as it ages, a mass of the most extraordinary wrinkles; fine microscopic lines form themselves all over the face, and this is often the only way one can tell an old man from a young one; their figures change little and their hair is always worn so short one can scarcely see its colour. They dress, too, in much the same fashion always, in stone colour or grey, with very tight trousers, very short coat or possibly an equally short jacket, and then the voluminous cloak of black cloth, edged (sometimes entirely lined) with red or green.

I loved wandering about these narrow little streets that seemed like a maze, constantly turning back upon themselves and leading, almost like tunnels, from one of the great plazas to another or opening into a church square or running down to the river. It was almost blinding to come out from the covered-in Sierpes, for instance, into the Plaza de la Constitucion, a great open square with balconied houses all round it and the buildings of the Ayuntamiento at one end. I remember so well the first time I was ever in Seville, standing to look at the great doors of this handsome building, and an officer, noticing my interest, beckoning to me to come inside and see the interior. I spoke little Spanish then, and he no English or French, but he managed to shew me the fine vaulted ceiling of the Sala Capitular, with its reliefs of the Spanish kings in its panels, the great staircase, the royal apartment, and some fine old portraits of Spanish royalties in the Salon del Alcalde. No Spaniard can ever resist interest in

his country, and will do anything to shew you its sights, if he thinks you will appreciate them.

The Casa del Ayuntamiento separates this plaza from the Plaza Nueva or, as it is more often called, the Plaza de San Fernando, the largest square in Seville, with date palms growing, a fountain and statue, and hotels all round it, the balconies of which are always gay with flowers. The trams pass through the end of this square, and a band plays here on summer evenings, and the booths of the Aguadores are set up.

My favourite square of all, however, was the Plaza del Triunfo, which has for its sides the cathedral with the wonderful Giralda on the north, the Lonja on the west and the Alcazar on the south, and never a day passed without my coming at some time into this plaza, and I never could make up my mind which side of it fascinated me most, though, thinking back, I am sure it was the cathedral and Giralda.

The cathedral is built on the site of a Moorish mosque, and the Giralda was originally the minaret, or prayer tower, from the top of which the faithful were called three times a day to their prayers. It is not only the great landmark of the town—you never lose sight of it—but it is one of the most remarkable towers in the world. It was built in 1184, for the Caliph Yakub Ibu Yusuf, and most of the stone was taken from old Roman buildings. It measures thirteen square metres at the base and its walls are eight feet thick. It has a unique and charming decoration, which begins about sixteen metres up, twin windows enclosed in an arch, decorated in such a manner that Murillo always said of it that the Moors here made lace in stone. It was seventy metres in height and

was topped by a minaret which supported the four golden apples, as they were called, really balls of gilded copper, so large that the gates of Seville had to be widened to admit them !

In 1395 the town was shaken by an earthquake, and these balls were thrown to the ground. They were measured and weighed and then apparently vanished into thin air, for no one has ever known what became of them ! In 1568 the present upper portion of the tower was built, and although so different in actual detail the grace and delicacy of the whole tower has not been impaired. On the top stands the figure of bronze, representing Faith and holding the banner of Constantine. This famous figure, although weighing one and a quarter tons and being fourteen feet high, moves quite easily when the wind strikes the banner or vane, and this gives the tower its name—"Giralda, the turning vane "

The lightness and delicacy of this high tower must be seen to be appreciated. In Murillo's picture we see Sts. Justa and Rufina lifting it in the hand like a filigree box or toy, and in spite of its great height one feels one could pick it up from among the great battlements of the cathedral and carry it away.

The cathedral itself is one of the great churches of the world. We are told that when it was decided to build a cathedral on the site of the Moorish mosque the chapter resolved to build a church so vast that those who came after should think them mad to have attempted it, and the result is certainly extraordinary. Of all the great southern churches it has the most arresting effect. Its great height, in which the tapering arches lose themselves in a cloud of incense, and its peculiar

darkness all go to enhance the mystery. Even for a Spanish church it is strangely dark ; the dim long aisles seem to fade into the perspective ; one can never see the end of them.

The high altar is magnificent. A huge golden retable, said to be amongst the masterpieces of wood-carving in Spain, holds the figure of the Virgin in the centre, given by S. Fernando to the cathedral, and in the forty-five surrounding niches are shewn scenes from her life and episodes of Bible history, realistically carved with such richness of detail that each one requires long and separate study. This whole screen lights up at high mass in the most remarkable way ; indeed, I cannot recall anywhere seeing the great ceremonial more gorgeously presented.

I remember, particularly, being in Seville once for the Festival of Corpus Christi and attending the service in the cathedral. This feast is a great Sevillian festival, and all the treasures were shewn. The high altar shone with the priceless gold and silver plate, altar coverings stiff with jewels and edged with splendid old lace, the priests in the most magnificent vestments—crimson and gold—the acolytes in purple cassocks with gilded mitres, the bishop who preached, in dark purple robes with full lawn sleeves, his crimson gloves and large amethyst ring,—all a pageant of colour such as the Spaniard loves.

Another time I went to see the celebrated dance of the Seises, which is done twice every year on the altar steps of Seville cathedral. Here, as it was the feast of Our Lady, all the robes were blue and white—her colours—and the ornaments of silver. The Seises who dance are specially selected and highly trained acolytes, who wore

costumes something like those of a court page, in blue and silver, and carried plumed hats. The special dance takes place late in the afternoon, about five o'clock, and before it is a huge procession, the priests and acolytes following with treasures, incense, banners, then the Seises, and then the bishop with the whole chapter and choir. The master of ceremonies, who precedes the bishop, is a strange figure in black satin knee-breeches, long coat, white wig and three-cornered hat, and carries a large silver stave. I realised then how essentially the great ceremonies of the Church are part of the very life of the people in southern countries; how they love the music and colour, the great rolling clouds of incense and the whole pageant passing up and down the long aisles. "It is *too* gorgeous," someone had whispered as the procession passed, but was at once admonished by an old priest standing near us. "No, Señora, nothing is too gorgeous for the Most High," he said, quietly. "We approach the kings of the earth with due pomp and circumstance, and it is well that the people should learn to give to the King of kings still more glory, and approach Him with ceremony and awe."

The dance itself is of great dignity, and reminded me of the descriptions of those solemn funeral dances held at the obsequies of the ancient kings of Greece, as, for instance, the ceremonial dance which Electra danced at the funeral of her beloved brother, Orestes. The Seises carry their hats in their hands as they walk up the steps of the altar, kneeling to do reverence and then forming into rows of eight facing each other. The priests kneel behind them, and behind the priests the procession banks up. The music is by Eslava, whose music

is seldom heard outside of Spain, but it is used there for all the greatest Church festivals. After the rows of eight are formed the boys put on their hats and begin to chant the hymns of praise to Our Lady. These are arranged in short verses—*coplas* they are called—recounting various episodes in her life, and all begin and end with the same refrain :

“ O mi, O mi Amada
Immaculada.”

When a certain amount of the verses have been sung they begin to dance, still singing and moving at first very slowly, the rows advancing and retreating, then advancing again and passing through the opposite row, turning and coming back again. The second movement is quicker, and at the turn the Seises turn twice—almost a double whirl round—and the drums in the choir clang out at the turn. The whole dance is like a very slow and ceremonious minuet, and is repeated three times, after which the boys sweep off their hats, kneel for a moment before the altar and disappear into the doors at the side.

Seville is the city of the dance, and it seems to me the happiest thought to thus bring the people's favourite pastime into their religion. Its introduction into the religious festival consecrates and ennobles it and turns it, in its highest aspect, into an act of devotion and worship. There is an enormous amount to see in the cathedral, but the chapter have a passion for moving their treasures, and year after year one finds pictures moved from one chapel to another, statues and medallions hung in different places, and there is always part of the cathedral walled up in scaffolding, being repaired. The enormous tomb of Christopher

Columbus, however, remains stationary. His ashes rest in the coffin carried by four figures, very much over life-size, representing Aragon, Castile, Leon and Navarre. Many of the chapels contain pictures by Murillo, and there is also that fine "Descent from the Cross" by Kempener, before which we are told Murillo himself used to spend hours in study. There are several examples of El Greco and the famous Goya, depicting Sts. Justa and St. Rufino, the two patron saints of the Giraldo. In painting this picture we are told that Goya chose the two most beautiful courtesans in all Seville as models for his saints.

I do not know at what time of the day this wonderful church is most beautiful. In the morning it is restful to walk into its cool greyness and shelter from the blazing sun; the light coming through the beautiful coloured windows makes splashes of warm reds and blues on the marble floor, picks out the silver and gold of the ornaments and diffuses a kind of sombre glow over the vast arches and ceilings. In the afternoon, after many masses have been celebrated, the blue clouds of the incense still hang about the upper arches, making them appear to fade away into heaven itself. It is then one realises their great height. When the light is nearly gone and vespers are being sung one cannot see any end to the long aisles at all or any roof, and one seems to be worshipping in some vast dream temple not made with hands; only the occasional gleam of a candle from one of the side chapels shews the little crowd of worshippers kneeling round it. For there are always worshippers in Seville cathedral, always some service going on somewhere inside it, some people looking at the pictures or inspecting the

vast treasury, where the ancient encrusted and embroidered robes of the bishops are shewn, and the magnificent golden chalices and vessels given at various times by the Spanish royal house.

Outside are three great doors, which, with the Court of the Oranges are the only parts of the Moorish mosque. The doors are wonderful examples of stone carving, but the Court of the Oranges is disappointing, the trees old and neglected, the pavement broken and rough; compared with the other lovely gardens in Seville, scarcely worth going to see.

Just across the square are some of the very loveliest gardens in the world —the celebrated gardens of the Alcazar. The Alcazar itself is very little like the original Moorish palace as it was, which was said to be double the present size. It has been the residence of the sovereigns of Spain since 1248, and they have all altered it. Some of it has been pulled down and some has been added. It was almost destroyed by fire in 1762, and the restoration further damaged its ancient character. The whole building is essentially Moorish, for when the Catholic kings restored it they copied rooms and halls from other Moorish buildings—from the Alhambra at Granada and from the mosque at Cordoba, and Moorish builders were employed in the reconstruction. It is most celebrated for its wonderful courts. Charles V. was married here to Isabel of Portugal, in the Hall of the Ambassadors, and he altered the Court of the Maidens, and is said to have laid out the gardens in their present form.

The Court of the Maidens has some of the finest arching and the most beautiful azulejos (tiling) in the whole palace, and the columns and pierced

stonework are very fine. In Charles V.'s own salon there is a fine wooden ceiling and pierced jalousies of great beauty.

The Dolls Court, to the west of the Court of the Maidens, was said to be the hall where Pedro the Cruel killed his brother, but the finest court of all is the Hall of the Ambassadors. It is enormous, quite square, and has a whole frieze of window niches under another frieze of almocarabes, the finest specimen of Moorish ornaments, as well as the finest tiles in the whole palace, beautiful vaulted doorways, and is one of the few Courts with a roof. Its dome dates from the time of John II.

All the other courts are open, and their colouring must be seen to be appreciated. One wanders through one beautiful court after another, admiring the unending diversity of arabesque and pattern used. Amongst these are many Moorish mottoes: "Allah is Great," "Glory to Allah," "There is no Conqueror but Allah."

It is the Gardens of the Alcazar that I find most enchanting. Here I have spent many sunny days, revelling in their beauty and visualizing some of the strange events that have happened here. There are groves and groves of orange trees; nearly all the walks are lined with them, and there is still to be seen the oldest orange tree known, said to have been planted by Pedro the Cruel, who lived here with his morganatic wife, the beautiful Maria Padilla. Then there are the highest acacia trees in Spain, climbing roses which grow to the top of pine trees, pomegranate, arbutus and high Asiatic palms; indeed, there is a whole plantation of palms in one corner of the gardens. There are shady arbours, little Moorish pleasure houses,

tiled and fountained, sunken gardens and terraces ; above all, there are the old fishponds beneath enormous magnolia trees, where the placid water is like a looking-glass, and it is very quiet and still.

The walls round these sunken pools are covered with climbing roses, geranium and various creepers, and one seems to be in a green grotto. I sat there late one afternoon when rain began to fall, sheltering under the huge trees and watching the raindrops run off the glossy leaves and fall into the water. The trickle of the water in the fountain and the drops of rain falling—falling—fascinated me, and I sat on till the rain ceased and the moonlight began to flicker through the leaves and shine on the water. I suddenly realised I had been forgotten ; the hour for closing was long past, and I began to wonder if I should have to spend the night in those enchanted gardens, when two of the guardians came hurriedly seeking the Señora who, they had remembered at their evening meal, had never gone out of the gates. It was enough for me to explain that their wonderful garden had bewitched me ; I had forgotten the hours passing, and their pleasure in a stranger's appreciation made them forget the broken rules. But their faces looked white and perturbed in the moonlight, and they hurried me out quickly. " One must not stay late in the gardens here, Señora," one of them said, gravely. " People have indeed been bewitched here, and strange things have happened ; even we, who know it so well, never come in after dusk alone."

The stories of the Alcazar Gardens are endless indeed. Dom Pedro's callous murder of his brother was by no means the only tragedy that occurred, and many of the stories circle round his



THE GARDENS OF THE ALCAZAR, SEVILLE

sinister memory. Tales of supper parties given to his friends, some of whom were never seen again; heartrending cries from the little stone dungeons under his private apartments are said to be the ghostly protests of beautiful maidens enticed here to love—and death. Yet he seemed to make the lovely Maria Padilla happy, though he kept her a close prisoner in the Alcazar and its gardens, and she was said not even to dare to look out of a window unless he were with her. Her bath is still to be seen, though now roofed in and dark and rather like a prison itself, with its barred gateway and only tiny grooves in the stone arching letting in the light. It must have been vastly different in the days when she and her ladies disported themselves in the water. The courtiers of her husband are said to have toasted her beauty in glasses of the water of her bath, and there is a charming story of one courtier, who never drank when the others did, and when asked by Dom Pedro the reason of this omission replied: "I do not wish to taste the sauce if I may never eat the partridge!" Near the steps down to the fishponds are special orange trees with scented leaves, and the whole gardens are heavy with the perfume of blossom and flowering shrubs.

Just as beautiful, in a different fashion, is the park lying just outside the town, the Park of Marie Louise. Its avenues are shady and scented; acacia, oranges, syringa, pomegranate, all have place here, and the walks are lined with tiny hedges of monthly roses, those pale pink roses that flower so freely. Every morning the gardeners sweep up the fallen leaves into rosy heaps, and every afternoon the hedge is just as full as ever of blossom. There are great shady plane trees and

cypress, and here too are lovely water gardens ; one in particular I liked specially to go to was a large still pool enclosed in stone terraces and surrounded by a very large pergola. The terraces are paved and ornamented with azulejos and have seats let into the stone walls. At one end the pergola is completely overgrown with masses of red and white roses—about six large trees, I think—at any rate, they cover not only the roof but the outside of the pergola entirely. The other end was roofed and walled in the same fashion with wisteria, the long trails hanging like enormous coloured tassels through the roof, while the sides were masses of different kinds of roses, creepers, tea roses ; those heavy scented deep yellow roses and the white nephitos rose that the Spaniards put into the hands of their dead.

Farther on there is another water garden, a series of pools and little waterfalls running through sunk grass lawns bordered with hedges of trimmed yew, cut into green battlements, gateways and all sorts of fantastic figures. There are innumerable shady seats and little arbours, and here one can sit through long sunny afternoons, listening to the trickling and falling of water, that delicious sound which the Moors held was a necessary adjunct of the perfect garden.

Seville has yet another park, the famous Paseo de las Delicias, which runs down the side of the river from the “fan fountain” for nearly two miles. Here it is that one sees the life of the people. In the afternoon it is the favourite drive, but in the evening the whole city comes out for a huge picnic. Whole families come, bringing their working donkey, who has a picnic of his own, snatching a few mouthfuls of grass while his owners camp

happily round and cook strange little meals, frying sardines on a charcoal fire between two bricks, or roasting chestnuts, buying the little pepper sausages or some of those strange shell-fish: prawns and crayfish, and the chick beans, of which Spaniards are so fond, are being hawked round. Men are crying "Water," "Sweetmeats," "Nuts," "Cakes," and there are bowling alleys, swings, barrel organs, with little ventas which set chairs and tables under the trees, where one can buy cigarettes, *amontillado*, *amisette* or the indispensable black coffee.

Farther on are larger restaurants, where you can go out and dine by moonlight out of doors under trees or in arbours, where the huge moths like bats fling themselves against the light, and there is always someone with a guitar or a fiddle. Seville, like all Spain, dines very late; nine or nine-thirty is the usual time for dinner, and one sits out in the summer till quite late in the night.

To see the life of the people at its very height, however, one must go out to the *Paseo de las Delicias* on a Sunday afternoon, when the whole town is out there holiday-making and everyone is bent on enjoyment. Then you grasp how easy life can be in a southern land, where it is possible to live out of doors all the year round, where food is cheap and easily procurable and everyone has plenty of time.

Across the river from the city lies the rather squalid suburb of Triana, once the great pottery centre, where the best *azulejos* were made and many of the finest ceramics. There are huge earthenware potteries here nowadays. All those deliciously coloured earthenware pots and basins and jugs which one longs to bring home and which

are used by the peasants all over Spain are made here, and modern tiles are made too, but the potter must turn in his grave to see the modern tiles and remember his lost art of colour! Triana is now inhabited by the very poorest class and by many gypsies. One reaches it across the Puente de Isabel Segunda, a large iron bridge which is always crowded with mules, donkeys, country carts and foot passengers.

Holy Week in Seville is the time when the city is most crowded by foreigners and therefore, to my mind, least of all its usual self. The extraordinary services, sacred processions and all the details of the great festival of this portion of the Church's year are much better seen in such towns as Toledo, Malaga or Cadiz, where they are intended for the natives themselves, and there is no chance of them becoming theatrical or being exaggerated into a show. The time to see Seville at its best and most characteristic is during the Feria, or Fair Week, which comes just after Easter. This great fair has been held, they say, since the sixteenth century, and every peasant in Spain brings his horses, mules, donkeys, goats, or whatever he can muster up to shew at it. For the ten days preceding it all roads in Spain lead to Seville and all roads are chock-a-block with animals being driven to it. The fair is held on the outskirts of the town, just near the entrance to the Marie Louise Park, and the preparations are tremendous. Four long broad avenues radiate from the plaza, with a huge bandstand in the centre. These avenues are decorated with festoons of electric light, ropes of paper flowers, flags, coloured poles, etc. Down the main avenue wooden huts and houses are erected, open on one

side, and these are taken by Sevillian families, who furnish them with rugs, chairs and tables, coloured hangings and a piano. Here they entertain their friends and the young ladies of the family dance, a crowd standing round the open front and applauding cheerily. Behind these four avenues the animals are kept and everyone spends their mornings during Fair Week in going round looking at them. In one smaller road horses are being tried, shewn and compared. Here you see the horsebreeder from country estancias in the grey Andalusian riding dress with fringed apron-like trousers, the short Andalusian coat, sash and sombrero. They ride magnificently, absolutely one with the horse, and remarkable feats of horsemanship are seen. In another enclosure are goats—whole families—with frisky little kids, and sheep, mules, donkeys, all being moved about to shew their points or being transferred from one owner to another. About noon the carriages begin, many decorated, many with fine mule teams, and everybody seems to have new and very smart harness and millions of bells. Sometimes one can hardly hear the band playing for the bells. All the clubs have stands opening on to one of the principal avenues, and many private enterprises have stands too, and one hires a chair there and watches the procession of carriages. The Spanish ladies wear their most gorgeous shawls, many wearing the high comb and mantilla, and all decorated with camellias, roses or carnations. I never realised what a very smart turnout a team of well-kept mules in fine leather harness and silver bells, with bright coloured tassels, could be till I saw them at the Seville Feria. The tassels are always chosen to match the coachman's livery and the

carriage cushions, and I remember one, in green and white tassels and livery and very smart tan leather harness and silver bells, looking particularly nice. Naturally, this time is *Eldorado* for all hawkers and gypsies (indeed it is said that every gypsy in Spain comes to the Seville Fair !) and you are offered fans, flowers, sweetmeats, bags of confetti and streamers of coloured ribbon for throwing, all the time.

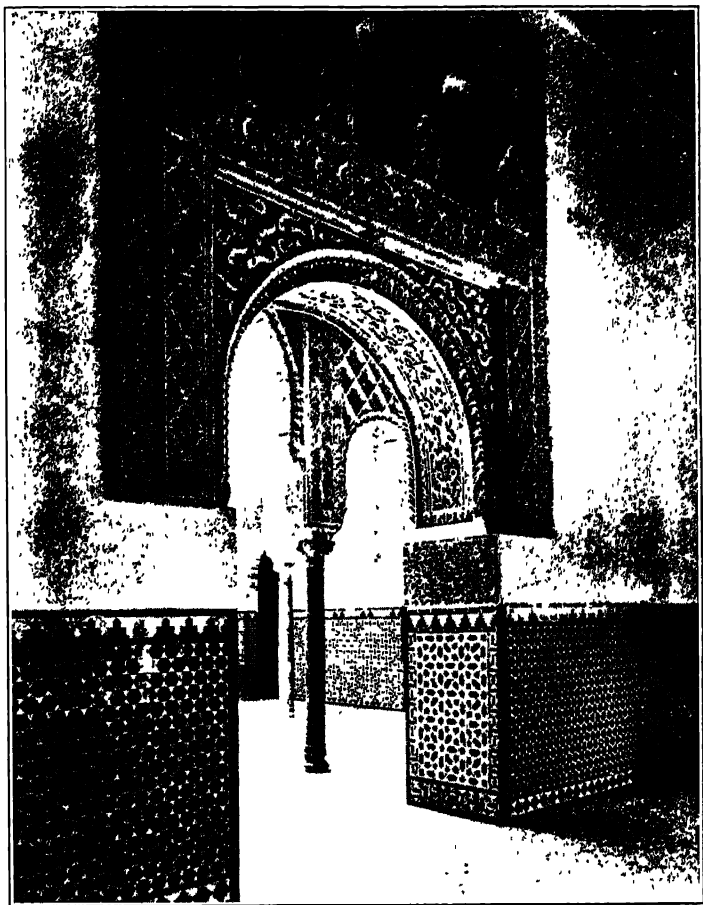
Towards the end of the afternoon the dancing in the private huts begins, but the best time is the evening, and before and after dinner one walks up and down, looking in at various dancing parties, and one soon hears which hut holds the most promising dancer. It is said that some of the best Spanish dancers have become known by first dancing to their families and friends in this way. There is a tremendous noise going on all the time,—pianos, guitars ; concertinas in each and every hut ; bands at the ends of all the avenues, bands in all the clubs and restaurants ; shrieking, clanging electric cars, which run up as far as the bandstand itself, discharging their crowds of passengers every moment ; a continuous hum of laughing, cheering voices and an incessant sound of mule bells.

The stories of Don Pedro the Cruel are among the most interesting of the Alcazar's histories, and the strange life of this monarch, which began with early tragedies, was mostly lived out in Seville. As a child his mother, who was atrociously treated by her husband, Alonzo XI., fled with the little heir, Don Pedro, and took refuge in the Alcazar at Seville. The famous Spanish statesman and minister, Albuquerque, protected and defended

them until Pedro became king. It was at Albuquerque Palace that Don Pedro met the lovely Maria Padilla—one of the greatest beauties who ever lived—and a noble Castilian by birth. Pedro married her secretly, but the marriage was betrayed to the Queen Mother and Albuquerque, who were horror-stricken, and refused to acknowledge it, and in order to conceal it from the nation immediately forced Pedro into a marriage with Blanche de Bourbon, Princess of France. It is said that this marriage, which Pedro reluctantly consented to solely for reasons of State, altered his whole character, changing him into a bitter and violent man. He married the French Princess at Valladolid, but deserted her three days after the wedding and returned to Seville, where the wife he loved held a regal court as long as she lived. The unfortunate Queen Blanche lived a miserable life, being imprisoned by her husband in one fortress after another and cruelly persecuted for many years, until at last he had her murdered in the royal castle at Medina-Sidonia. Then he worked till the Church acknowledged as valid his marriage with Maria Padilla, who lies in the royal chapel with the rest of the Spanish queens. Pedro's hand was against every man, and only his beautiful wife could call forth any love or kindness from his black heart.

He invited as guest to the Alcazar Abu Saïd the King of Granada and then murdered him for his jewels, some of which he gave to his wife, some to courtiers, and one—the great ruby now in the English regalia—he gave to his friend the Black Prince. This is one of the largest rubies ever known, and was one of Elizabeth of England's favourite jewels.

It was in the Alcazar, too, in the Hall of the Ambassadors, that he slew his half-brother, the Lord of Santiago, whom Pedro called to his court to explain a rebellion, from which Santiago was able to entirely exonerate himself, but Pedro had determined on his death, and simply called out to his guard to slay him and his retinue. One of these cavaliers fled to the chamber of Maria Padilla for refuge, and even held up her little daughter before him as a shield, but Pedro, who followed him, roughly tore the child away and killed the cavalier with his own sword. Pedro it was who hung up the skulls of some judges who refused to give verdicts in accord with his wishes, whom he promptly beheaded, hanging up their skulls outside his bedroom windows, so that all might see them and realise what happened to those who could not see eye to eye with the king ! His amours were innumerable, and he is said to have kept a complete harem of beauties in the Torre del Oro down by the river ; in addition he had love affairs all over the country. He burnt Dona Urraca Osorio alive for refusing to become his mistress, and in the town of Seville itself his adventures were as the sand on the seashore ! There is an old Moorish house still standing in Seville of which a typical story of Pedro is told. In this house an old woman sat up late one night at her baking. Hearing a turmoil in the street she looked out and saw to her horror a murder being committed. Just opposite was the barred window of a well-known Sevillian beauty, who was accustomed nightly to be serenaded by her various admirers. Amongst these was the king himself, who loved to wander, cloaked and masked, round the streets of his capital at night, pretending



THE INTERIOR OF THE ALCAZAR, SEVILLE

he was but an ordinary cabellero love-making in the Spanish fashion. The gallants were very careful to leave the coast clear on the nights when Pedro was abroad, but on the night in question, arriving at the window, he found his place already filled, and with his usual impetuous temper immediately killed the usurper. All this was witnessed by the old baker-woman, who recognised the king, but who dared not speak. Next day the whole town was in a turmoil, as the murdered man was a well-known cavalier, a member of a powerful family, who clamoured for the punishment of the murderer.

The king, who believed no one had seen the deed, espoused their cause and, not wishing to offend them, sent for the Alcalde of Seville and summoned him on pain of death to produce the murderer within three days. The horrified Alcalde was dumbfounded and had a house-to-house enquiry made, when eventually he came across the old baker-woman, who eventually told him what she had seen. But the poor Alcalde was little better off, for he could not openly accuse the king himself. Eventually he made a life-size wooden image, the face of which he painted in exact likeness to the king and clothed it in robes copied from one of the king's costumes, and on the third day went to Pedro and said he had found the murderer. The king incredulously demanded that the man should be produced, whereupon the Alcalde brought in the image. A mock trial was held, the king being judge, and the verdict he gave was that the image should be beheaded and hung in chains at the entrance of the street of the murder, which was all solemnly carried out, the street being called Justicia ever since, and a bust

of Pedro may to-day be seen on the very spot where he committed the murder.

Pedro himself was stabbed to the heart by Henry of Trastamara, the brother of Don Fadrique, the Master of Santiago, who revenged his brother's death on the king seven years after the murder. Thus was one fratricide avenged by another, and Pedro's stormy life ended in a fitting and terrible fashion. It is extraordinary to realise that these lovely halls and courts have actually witnessed these black and ghastly deeds ; they are so brightly coloured, so sunny and gay, so full of the songs of birds and the sound of fountains.

The streets in Seville are always called by a single name—thus " Sierpes," " Genoves," " Tetuan," " Zaragoza," narrow winding little streets where at night one often sees a cloaked man with a guitar singing at a window in the same fashion as did his ancestors two hundred years ago. The cobble-stones are terribly trying to the feet, and the narrow streets are very full, a passing mule crowding you against the wall or into a doorway for refuge. I remember losing myself in the maze of little streets on my way from the Church of the University in the Sierpes, where are the tombs of the Sevillian family of Ribera, to their famous house, the Casa de Pilatos, in the Caballeriza. Once found, the House of Pilate is a typical Moorish house, in excellent preservation. Its owner, the Marques de Tarifa, had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and completed the house begun by his father, in what was believed then to be an exact imitation of the house of Pilate there. It has a very fine staircase and particularly beautiful patios, with arched cloisters and gorgeous

tiles. The ceiling over the staircase and the old frescoes in the upper rooms are much admired, but I remember chiefly the perfectly gorgeous bougain-villia in one of the courtyards, which covers almost one side of it like a great curtain of purple velvet.

Another interesting little expedition was to the Hospital of the Caridad, endowed by Don Miguel de Mañara as the result of a vision. This lies on the way to the bull-ring, and one enters through a huge gateway to a large court, where there are fountains with goldfish. The day I was there they were cleaning out these fountains, and the sisters were greatly disturbed, catching the fish in little nets for fear any should die while the fountain was clear of water! These sisters manage the whole hospital, taking care of the one hundred and forty old patients and doing all the work of the household themselves. One of them takes care of the little church, acting as sacristan, and it was she who shewed us the celebrated pictures there, which contain six Murillos, including his famous paintings of Moses striking the rock, the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and a very beautiful Infant Jesus. Near the door is that extraordinary picture by Pedro Roldan, "Los dos Cadaveres," shewing the open coffins of a bishop and a knight, before which it is said Murillo used to hold his nose, so realistic is the detail. The story of the endowment of this hospital is a popular legend of Seville.

Don Miguel de Mañara was a cavalier who led the gay life of his day with great enthusiasm. One night, coming home late from a dissipated carouse, he met a funeral procession with full mourning paraphernalia. Waiting for it to pass, he asked whose it was and heard that it was the funeral of

Don Miguel de Mañara, whose body was shewn him in the coffin. He was asked to join in the funeral mass for the dead soul and, horror-stricken, did so, being found next morning unconscious on the floor of the church. From this time he was a changed man, gave up his gay life and devoted himself to the care of the poor, endowing the hospital at his death on the condition that his body might rest under the slab at the church door, so that all who entered might trample on "the worst man in the world."

Another famous legend of Seville is that of the Casa del Duende, or the Goblin House. Here lived, in 1610, an unfortunate family of Spanish Moriscos, who were hurried out of the country without any of their possessions, and the head of the family had just time to bury his treasures of gold and jewels in a special vault he had built under the patio of his house before leaving. He furthermore secured them by having the vault closed magically by a spell laid on it by a well-known Moorish sorcerer. Years passed, but no chance occurred for him to return from Morocco to retrieve his treasure, and he died, leaving the secret to his only daughter Fatima, who spoke Spanish, which she taught to her daughter, intending to travel some day to Spain as natives and obtain her father's treasure. After many adventures Fatima and her daughter Zuleima arrived in Spain, assumed Christian names, dressed as peasants, and made their way to Seville, giving out that they had returned from paying a vow to a celebrated Shrine of the Virgin. Fatima obtained a position as a servant in the very house which had belonged to her father and began at once to instruct her daughter in the great task for which they had

come. She bided her time, ingratiating herself with the family and waiting till winter came and they retired to the first floor and the patio was closed for the season.

Then began the real work. The sorcerer's spell was to be removed by a special incantation recited by Fatima at midnight to the light of a small green candle. Only as long as the candle burned would the doors of the vault remain open, and the candle was but one inch long. The moment it was lit and the words spoken the vault opened, but, alas, would not admit the stout matron. Some precious moments were lost in persuading the daughter to descend, and she was eventually thrust down by her mother, who exhorted her to be quick as the candle would not last long. One basketful of gold was sent up and the mother, crying to her daughter to hurry, saw the doors of the vault slowly closing. She shrieked to Zuleima, who swooned in horror, and all her mother heard as the doors closed was a faint groan. The wretched woman flung herself on the stone, beating it with her hands till they became shapeless, bleeding stumps, and she herself fainted on the door of the vault. Recovering after a while, she heard a strange distant voice, which she recognised as that of Zuleima crying "Mother, dear Mother, leave me not in the dark." On dark winter nights it is believed that Fatima is seen here, beating her head on the stone, with a basket of gold by her side, and that if one listens one hears the sorrowful cry of Zuleima : "Mother, dear Mother, leave me not in the dark."

But there are many amusing tales of the old houses and streets of Seville as well as sorrowful ones ! There is the house to be seen just outside

the Alcazar in the gay little Plaza of St. Tomas, where the famous Barber of Seville—Figaro—had his shop. There is no barber there now, and one wonders why no enterprising hairdresser seizes such an excellent and ready-to-hand advertisement and becomes the second Barber of Seville !

CHAPTER V

CADIZ

There are several ways of going from Seville to Cadiz. By train it only takes three and a half hours, and on the whole that is almost the best way to go. The motor road is indifferent, and regular dust storms blow across it. There are little steamers that go down the river from one town to the other, which are supposed to do the trip in eight hours, though it generally takes much longer.

After one has passed the village of San Juan de Azualfarache, with its high lying convent church, its fine terraces and groves of orange trees, there is little of interest, for it runs through the Marismas—vast salt marshlands, which stretch away into what seems interminable distance to the left. On the right banks are a few orange gardens and several dilapidated little villages occupied with pottery and fishing. One sometimes catches glimpses of one of the herds of bulls reared on parts of these marshlands, or occasional wildfowl, but the whole landscape is desolate and depressing and well merits the name of Algaida, or "The Desert," as the Moors called it.

It is well to take a late afternoon train from Seville, arriving in Cadiz in the evening, for the lights down the coast at the end of the trip are brilliant, and it is fine to run out along the narrow

strip of land which connects the town with the mainland, the waves dashing up almost to the carriage wheels, and feel that one really is going out to sea to Cadiz—the “Bride of the Sea,” as she has so often been called.

Cadiz is one of those delightful towns that sea lovers adore, and other people cannot bear. She lives for the sea, by the sea, and actually on the sea, resting on the waters like a huge waterlily, with the smell of the sea in all her streets and parks, and even mingling with the incense of her churches.

Cadiz has all the life and movement of one of the world's great ports—which, indeed, she always has been. The people one meets in the streets and on the quays have the air of travellers, going on somewhere. Great streams of life flow through her and one feels there never could be stagnation here, but always pulsing life and adventure. Moreover, Cadiz is a very beautiful city, perhaps the most beautiful in all Spain. Her position is superb and unique—on a rocky peninsula which is practically an island—with the blue waters of the Atlantic wrapping her round, and her dazzling white houses absolutely glittering in the sun.

She is the gateway of the west, and long before the ships of Columbus rode at anchor in her wide harbour, she had been extolled as such by many ancient writers.

The Moors likened Cadiz to “a dish of silver in a bowl of blue,” and a most felicitous description of De Amicis says she could only be described “by writing the word ‘white’ with a white pencil on blue paper.”

In addition to being all blue and white, she is all light and air. There is absolutely no smoke; the

atmosphere is clear as a diamond and the sunshine is more brilliant than anywhere else in Europe.

I knew an old Spanish sea captain who lived in Cadiz when he left his calling, mainly because he could still imagine himself on board his ship. From the broad balcony of his apartments in the Paseo del Sur one scarcely saw the road beneath and only heard the lapping of the waves against the massive walls, thirty to fifty feet in height and nearly seventy feet thick, which protect the Cadiz rock

“ When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Stormwind of the equinox.”

El Capitan was never tired of telling stories of his adored city; stories which had apparently been handed down from generation to generation in his family—all seafaring folk. He told me his family had served the sea and Spain in direct line since the days of Charles V. “ We have the sea in our blood, Señora,” he would say, “ for whoever is born of Cadiz parentage must serve the sea. Nothing else will satisfy him.” Many, many hours have I spent on his veranda, listening to old stories of the sea, but always and ever he came back to his native town—the pearl of cities—the Moor’s “ silver dish ”!

“ Picture to yourself, Señora,” he would say, “ the bravery, the courage of those ancient people, the Phoenicians. They were the true sailormen, ever adventurous, ever daring! All others were content with the Mediterranean; that inland sea with no tides. No one ventured outside the Great Gates, the Pillars of Hercules, which stand at Gibraltar and guard the way to the great

ocean. Then one day some brave Phœnician captain adventured forth and sailed through them into the open sea—por Dios—what a man he must have been ! and discovered this lovely place, and founded an ancient city here !” Not only did they found a city ; they founded settlements all along the coast. They taught the natives to boil down the juices of trees, and stain the wool of their flocks and herds that rich scarlet, and weave it into cloth which fetched so high a price in Assyrian and Roman markets ; they taught them to work in metals and how to salt and pickle fish in the approved Phœnician fashion. They exported tunny fish from their special settlement Cadeira, on the bay of Cadiz, and they took back with them to their own country pickled and salted eels from Tartessus.

There seems little doubt that Tartessus, or Tarteso, one of the Phœnician settlements in the delta of the Guadalquivir, which empties itself into the sea close to Cadiz, was the ancient Tarshish of the Bible. My old captain believed as thoroughly in this theory as many people do in the theory of the “ Lost Ten Tribes.” He had studied the subject continually, but his great source of information was the Book of Ezekiel—he proved that Solomon built special ships for the Phœnicians to trade with Tarshish, and pointed out, too, that Ezekiel enumerates all the metals of Andalusia in his mention of Tarshish ; metals that were not then found together anywhere else where the Phœnicians traded. “ Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kinds of riches ; with silver, iron, tin and lead they traded in thy fairs.”

He had found some charming verses in which were described Solomon’s ships that traded here.

“ Come with me from Egypt, my love, with me
from Egypt,

Down with me from Egypt, to sail upon the sea.
The ship is wrought of ivory, the decks of gold,
And thereupon are sailors singing love songs,
And waiting to cast free.

“ Come with me from Egypt, my love, with me
from Egypt.

The rowers there are ready and will welcome thee
with shouts !

The sails are silken sails and scarlet,
Cut and sewn in Constantine ;

The scarlet of the painted lips of women there-
abouts.

“ And there for thee are spikenard, purple grapes
and cinnamon,

Pomegranates and frankincense, and flagons full
of wine,

And cabins carved in cedar wood

That came from far off Lebanon,

And all the ship and singing crew and rowers
there are thine !

“ So come with me from Egypt, my love, with me
from Egypt.

They're hauling up the anchor

And but tarrying there for thee.

The boatswain's whistling for a wind,

A wind to blow from Egypt,

A wind from scented Egypt to blow us out to
sea !”

Tarshish not only gave its name to the settlement on the delta island, it was probably a name given to the whole strip of coast from the mouth of the river down to the entrance to the Mediterranean.

Be that as it may, the Phoenicians started that great trading mart which established Cadiz as one of the richest cities in the then known world. Indeed, Cadiz's riches have been her undoing times without number—she was too rich a prize not to be fought for, and everyone wanted her !

Carthage occupied the town and made it Carthaginian headquarters during their conquest of the whole southern peninsula, while Hannibal and Scipio fitted out fleets from here. The Romans took it after the second Punic war, named it Gades, and in the time of Augustus it contained five hundred Equites—a greater number than any town excepting Padua and Rome itself.

Under Roman rule the city developed enormously. Juvenal and Martial write of it as "jocosa Gades," and describe it as a city of Venus. Indeed, it had been dedicated by the Phoenicians to Astarte, and its inhabitants worshipped the goddess in their time, and the city was even then famous for its beautiful women and its dancing girls—the "improbæ Gaditanæ" as the Romans later described them. The city was furthermore celebrated for its food. It had a special secret of seasoning and preserving meats, as justly celebrated as its pickled and salted fish.

El Capitan had, in addition to his verses, many tales of those spacious times ; of the dancing girls, the games, the fighting, the Roman galleys lying in the wide harbour, their rowers singing as they swung the great oars, for chained slaves were

compelled to sing salutes and to make music if their masters desired it. He had made coloured sketches of all the different kinds of ships he knew must have been in Cadiz waters ; of what manner of sailors manned them ; their speech, their dress, their customs. " Who knows what strange craft sailed here, Señora ; what manner of merchandise came to this port ? In olden houses here one comes across queer devices, built into the walls and courtyards, and in old dim shops you may find old silks, banners, queer metal ornaments and lamps, strangely shaped jugs and drinking vessels." I never could persuade him to take me to these old shops, but, then, I could so seldom lure him off his balcony ! " They are all gone now," he would say ; " people have bought them and taken them to foreign lands—but in my young days—!"

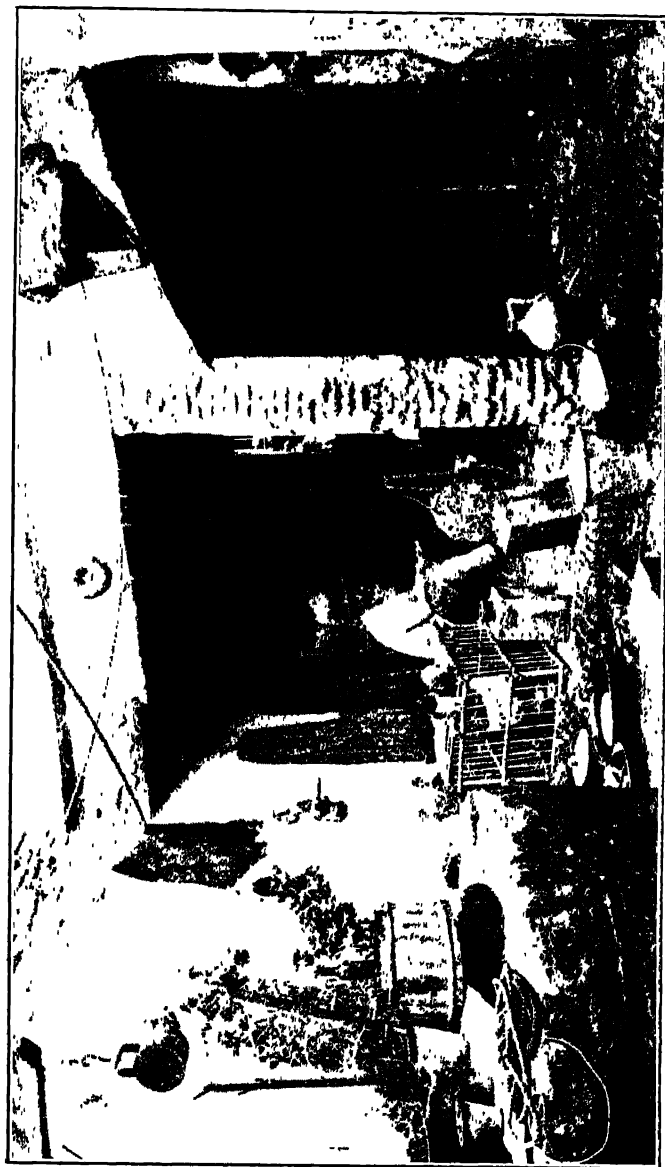
The history of Cadiz sinks into forgetfulness during the Moorish occupation. They were not enthusiastic sea lovers, and preferred the splendid palaces, tessellated courtyards and lovely gardens of Seville and Granada. But it revived again in the days of Columbus, who sailed constantly from its harbour, and from then on it was again the scene of constant fighting. It was too near Barbary for those inveterate pirates to leave it alone, but every time they fell upon the fair city its inhabitants rose up and defeated them. The great English admiral, Drake, burnt Spanish ships in its harbour and many, many times since then its battlements have re-echoed the boom of cannon. In 1587 a great battle again took place, and thirteen Spanish men of war were destroyed in the very harbour itself, and the whole town looted and plundered, but so great were its riches that it soon recovered, and in 1770 was known to

contain more wealth than the port of London itself.

When I could entice El Capitan from his balcony we went round the town. There is not very much to see, but the streets are pleasant, with high shining houses that keep off the glare of the sun, and are full of the sea wind, cool and refreshing even in the great heat. All the streets lead down to the sea, or into some of those quiet plazas, like that of de Mina, for instance, which was formerly the garden of the Capuchin convent, and is now a shady square. Strolling up from here through the Alameda de Apodaca to the famous Parque Genovés there is a charming view of the mainland, with a far distant mountain range. The park is quite new, but well laid out—again on the site of an old monastery garden—and has a summer theatre and a most delightful terrace.

There are really two cathedrals; the old one, which was almost entirely destroyed during the siege of 1596, having been rather clumsily restored, and the newer one, built in 1722, which has a fine dome and broad imposing aisles, but is very dark. The view from the bell tower is one of the finest in all Cadiz, the other view tower being the old Torre del Vigia—the old watch tower—from which all arriving and passing ships are still signalled. It was in one of the Cadiz churches that Murillo met his death—the church of Santa Catalina,—which belonged to the old Capuchin convent, where he fell from the scaffolding in painting its high altar picture, "The Betrothal of St. Catherine."

But, as usual in a port, it was the quays that fascinated me, and I could sit for hours watching the huge steamers unload. Many liners put into



AN OLD SHOP IN CADIZ

Cadiz for a few hours and discharge hundreds of passengers, who roam about the streets, eat some of the little oysters for which the town is famous, drink the special sherry which is served with them, and seem generally relieved when the time comes to return to their ship. Like all Spanish cities—but like others only in this one respect—Cadiz requires time and leisure to enjoy. To the traveller hurrying through she will be only like other great seaports; perhaps a little whiter, a little cleaner, a little sunnier!

To see her at her very best one should choose a warm evening and go up to the terrace of the Parque Genovés. Here you can sit and dine under the trees, beginning your dinner with the little oysters sprinkled with a special sauce for which Cadiz is famous; then will come a soup of vegetables, justly famous throughout the country, afterwards spiced meat with its special salad, and I remember a fascinating sweetmeat of little wood strawberries with grated nuts and cream. There is a very delicious but rather heady wine of the country, which those who do not care for the native sherry can obtain, and they will serve you with very wonderful coffee.

After this meal, if you have chosen your evening well, you will be able to understand and appreciate the mood which made the author of *Lavengro* weep for very emotion at the extraordinary beauty of Cadiz by night!

Even in the dark the city seems to shine with a dim translucent radiance; the shimmer of the water is almost unearthly, and one longs to sit out all night on that terrace, watching the stars dance in the rigging of the huge ships, and the moon come up out of Africa, not so very far away!

CHAPTER VI

RONDA

The motor road from Cadiz to Algeciras was one of the few unfortunate experiences. A very good motor omnibus runs daily, and we were advised to take this in preference to a smaller car, and soon after starting we realised why. The omnibus is heavy, fitted with powerful springs and comfortably upholstered ; consequently, when thrown against the roof or flung at the sides, one descends at least, on to a well cushioned seat, or maybe on a less fortunate passenger. I wondered when I saw how very carefully the luggage was being strapped down, and shortly after leaving San Fernando and a paved highway we entered "*the road*," as it was ever afterwards tabulated in the vocabulary of our chauffeur, who followed with our own car. It certainly was an exciting drive, for we seemed literally to bound from one side of the road to the other, avoiding ruts and holes with an agility which made the bus appear positively alive. The pessimistic chauffeur made only two comments on the drive. Halting about halfway, he came up to me and said, "Madam, I cannot be responsible for anything that happens to the car to-day," to which we agreed, and later, on our arrival in Algeciras, he said he would not be able to go on for two whole days. Asked if he had had any mishap he said : "No, but everything was loose ; she was "shook to bits !"

This road, however, was re-made only a few months ago, and is now one of the best in Spain. There is such continual discussion about Spanish roads in regard to motoring that many people are dissuaded from travelling in Spain for this reason, which is absurd. Spain is adapting itself in the most remarkable way to modern traffic, and an astonishing improvement can be noted month by month in the upkeep and care of the roads, most particularly in the north. For some reason unknown to me, the Spanish R.A.C. always seem to take a dubious view when asked about the condition of certain routes; perhaps they are afraid to commit themselves. I always suspected my pessimistic chauffeur of having been unduly depressed by their accounts from the first, and he was generally obliged to own up, after we had finished a trip, that the road was very much better than he had been led to expect!

As a matter of fact, all the roads in the north, from Irun to Vigo, and as far down as Madrid, are as good as any of the untarred roads in Europe and better than those of various nations who have not been able to make good since the war. The direct road from Madrid to Seville is bad in parts, but by making a short detour from the straight line, and going by Toledo, Navalморal, Trujillo and Merida, a road which would be considered good in any country can be discovered, and I have heard of travellers who have motored repeatedly over this road without ever bursting a tyre.

The roads in Andalusia—particularly in the provinces of Cordoba, Cadiz and Malaga—are tolerable and passable. The bad and indifferent roads are in the eastern provinces round Valencia,

and particularly in Cataluna, but I am told that special efforts are being made to improve and rebuild these routes.

Nevertheless, the trip from Cadiz to Algeciras was a wonderful drive from the point of scenery.

Much of the way is down the side of the coast, then turning inland over the hills, where we saw a flock of egrets by the side of a high lake, then out to the coast again, and soon we were entering Tarifa, with its Moorish gate and tall palms, and the mountains of Africa shewing up purple and blue across the Straits.

There is a good coast road winding round the cliffs from Tarifa to Algeciras, with full view of the Straits and the African shore all the way. The little town of Algeciras is picturesque, but distinctly uninteresting. It lies on the west side of the bay, with the Sierra de los Gazules, covered with cork woods, behind it. It has quite a decent bathing beach, but the wind sweeps it from all sides, and it sometimes gets absolutely tropical rainstorms. I well recollect one such storm, which kept us in the hotel for three whole days, the while we sat in the lounge and watched the huge palm leaves being broken down and the flowers being washed out of the garden beds on to the paths! The hotel Reina Cristina at Algeciras is charming, like a comfortable country house. It was built for the Morocco Conference, in 1906, and lies out of the town itself on the bay and has a delightful terraced garden, from which one gets the finest view of Gibraltar, lying just opposite across the bay.

Algeciras is a little town on a hill. Its straggling streets of white houses with balconies and the usual barred windows on the ground floor all lead

up to the plaza, where there is the Club Nautico and a band plays in the afternoons. There are cafés round this plaza where one may drink coffee and listen to the band, or ascend the watch tower, which was built by Charles III. in order to spy on English doings in occupied Gibraltar, so we are told, for the Spaniards retired here when Gib. was theirs no longer. Algeciras gets its name from the Moorish al-Gezira al-Khadra or "Green Island," and was always known as the Moorish key to Spain. There are really delightful walks in the cork woods behind the town, but of course the main thing to do is to take the ferry across to Gibraltar, that great rock which was the *Fretum Herculeum* of the ancients. They had strange beliefs about the unknown ocean, which was the boundary of the world to them. The Phœnicians believed that the Straits of Gibraltar were the southern gates to this mysterious ocean, and that that narrow strip of water between England and France, which we call the Channel, was the northern gate, though to what inland sea the northern gate led they knew not, never adventuring farther than Cornwall, its very entrance.

Gibraltar lies at the east or inside end of the Straits, and from there it is just twelve and a half miles across to Africa: the western or outside end is from Cape Trafalgar, in Spain, to Cape Spartel, in Morocco—twenty-eight miles across—whilst the central point is narrowest of all, just eight miles between Tarifa in Spain and the Cuchillos de Siris in Africa. The crossing is always fresh, partly because of the land winds sweeping down from both Spain and Africa, and partly because of the strong currents—that of the Mediterranean, salt and heavy, flowing out to the ocean below the

lighter Atlantic current, which sometimes rushes into the inland sea at the rate of five miles an hour.

Gibraltar is a great sight, whenever viewed. By day it appears as the effigy of an enormous lion—the rock being exactly the shape of the king of beasts—crouching with his head towards Africa and guarding the Straits for Europe. By night it is still a finer view, for the great mass of rock, glittering with lights, rises sheer out of the sea, looking like an enormous fortified city. The rock is united to the mainland by an isthmus nearly two miles long and only half a mile wide : this provides the “neutral ground” between Spain and Gibraltar, to the north of which lies the Spanish frontier town of La Lima de la Concepcion.

As in all hill towns, the streets of Gibraltar are narrow and steep, straggling up to the North Town in terraces and steps, and here are no white balconied houses but all grey stone, the same as the rock itself. It is strange to hear English spoken all over and to meet so many British sailors and soldiers in the streets. There are many Arabs and Moorish merchants to be seen too, both in the streets and on the quays, for there is a great deal of smuggling done, despite the vigilance of the English Customs. One sees the strangest things being hawked—rugs and carpets, of course ; Arab coffee machines and coffee mills ; strips of silk and silk flags and Arab burnous or capes ; embroideries from Tunis and Constantine ; semi-barbaric stones strung on camel’s hair, or set in thick bands of metal ; necklaces of gold coins, said to come from the dancing women of the Ouléd Nails ; strings of camel beads—anything, in short, that the Moors think they can sell to un-

wary Europeans and that they can get through the Customs under their voluminous robes.

I have been told that there is absolutely nothing that cannot be bought in Gibraltar—in some of the dark little streets there—if one only gives the shopkeeper a little time to procure it !

Some of the smuggling stories are amusing ; no native is allowed to go on board any of the steamers which lie here to coal, as the whole service of plate from a liner was brought away once and openly offered for sale in Gibraltar the next day after the ship had sailed. Everyone tries to bring English matches back from Gib., as the Spanish matches are beyond description bad, but it is disconcerting, after successfully evading Customs and getting them across, to find the same Bryant & May boxes being offered all the way up to Ronda on the railway stations.

Gibraltar's history is an almost continuous account of fighting ; everyone took it and lost it, and some took it again and kept it for a space. In 1783 its last great siege was raised, and England has possessed it ever since. There is a cricket club, a lawn tennis club, and even golf links ; naval harbours, dockyards and stalactite caves. There is the fine drive along Europa Main Road, beginning at the corner of the Alameda Gardens, with their sub-tropical vegetation, and ascending along the west slope of the rock, between villas and gardens, past the Admiral's house, the barracks and the naval hospital, right out to Europa Point, the most southerly extremity of the rock, where the lighthouse stands, then back along the other side, with a fine view of the Spanish coast and the mountains of Estepona, past the Governor's cottage to the Monkey's Cave. But unfortunately

the climate is far from attractive. The north wind—direct from the Ronda Sierras—is piercingly cold and the east wind shrouds the whole rock in fog. In summer it becomes a baking oven, and everyone who can goes up into the mountains to Ronda or, failing that, over to the shady gardens of the Reina Cristina across the bay.

The resident population of Gibraltar are mainly of Spanish descent. Although there are many immigrants from the whole of the Mediterranean seaboard, the Spaniards of the mainland call all the inhabitants "rock-scorpions," and look down on them with disdain.

The railway from Algeciras to Ronda is a gradual ascent, winding up first through the cork woods of the Sierra de los Gazules, crossing the Guadarranque, then the Hosgargante and reaching the first of the famous tunnels—high up in the mountains—before entering which one has a last fine view of Gibraltar, the Straits and the African mountains. From now on we are in the wild fastnesses of the Sierra de Ronda, with the river Guadiaro cutting its way through deep valleys and rocky passes and forming, in the very narrowest part, the interesting Guadiaro Gorge. Alongside of this the railway runs, and a wonderful piece of engineering it is! It crosses the turbulent Guadiaro again and again by many bridges; it passes under and through the mountains themselves by means of tunnels, and it is after passing the eighth of these tunnels, I think, that the most awe-inspiring view of this extraordinary gorge is obtained. All the way up one has the sensation of penetrating deeper and deeper into the heart of these wild Sierras and retreating farther and farther from civilization. This is a fitting place

for all those dark and mysterious deeds which the Spaniards attribute to the Moors, and it requires very little imagination to people these desolate hills with brigands, hosts of Moorish horsemen, prisoners kept in impregnable mountain towers, and to reconstruct the ruins of Moorish castles and strongholds one sees on the spurs of the hillside. As the train slowly makes the last ascent more and more mountains appear, until one enters with a great sweeping curve the high plateau on which the town stands, with a complete circle of mountains standing sentinel all round it.

Ronda has, indeed, one of the most remarkable sites in the world; I know of nothing quite like it.

The plateau in the centre of the mountains is cut across from north to south by an immense ridge of rock, in the very centre of which is a huge cutting gorge, or tajo, 330 ft. deep, through which the river rushes, and on either side of this great cleft rock lies Ronda, the old city, built by the Moors on the site of the Roman town of Arunda, hanging on the south side, and the new town, built in 1485 by the Catholic kings, on the north.

These two towns, or two portions of Ronda, are connected by one of the most extraordinary bridges in the world; indeed, it is the continuation of the broad, main street running through both towns, with huge roomy flying buttresses built out, on which one can stand and gaze at the amazing view. These buttresses are heavily railed, and instinctively one clings to them. I have taken several persons on to this great bridge for the first time, and I have never yet seen anyone who did not hold their breath with awe and wonder as the magnificent scene unfolds before them. You are standing over a river of drenching mist,

the gorge being so deep and narrow that the water is seldom visible, you only see the foam and spray seething beneath you as though in a cauldron and hear the deafening roar of rushing water. All round stands the great circle of rugged mountains, the Sierra de Grazalema to the north west, 5,630 feet in height ; the Sierra de Firbar in the south west ; due south rise the Sierra de Ronda and Estepona, while to the south east the Sierra de Tolo towers up to a height of 6,425 feet. Truly an extraordinary panorama ! I have stood for hours on this bridge, looking at the changing colours on the mountains as the sun catches the peaks and paints them crimson, or yellow or blue ; at the deep purple and black shadows in the valleys ; at the patchwork quilt of coloured fields laid out on the fertile plain—ripe millet and grain in yellows and browns, huge patches of red clover grown for mule fodder, the tender green of young vines, and at the double rainbow lying across the scarves of grey mist over the foaming river.

On a windy day one has the sensation of flying here, or at least of being suspended in the air,—a sea of mist below, dark shadows moving across the plain and great clouds scudding across the sky. Nature seems elemental, and one is at its mercy, the old gods of Olympus might have taken up their abode in the Sierra and be wrecking the earth in their vengeance. I once saw an extraordinary storm from this bridge. The thunder rolled round the amphitheatre, re-echoing from one mountain to another ; the earth literally seemed to rock, and one could picture the cataclysm that threw up the chain of Sierra and rent the great cleft in the centre of the rock.

When one can tear oneself away from nature

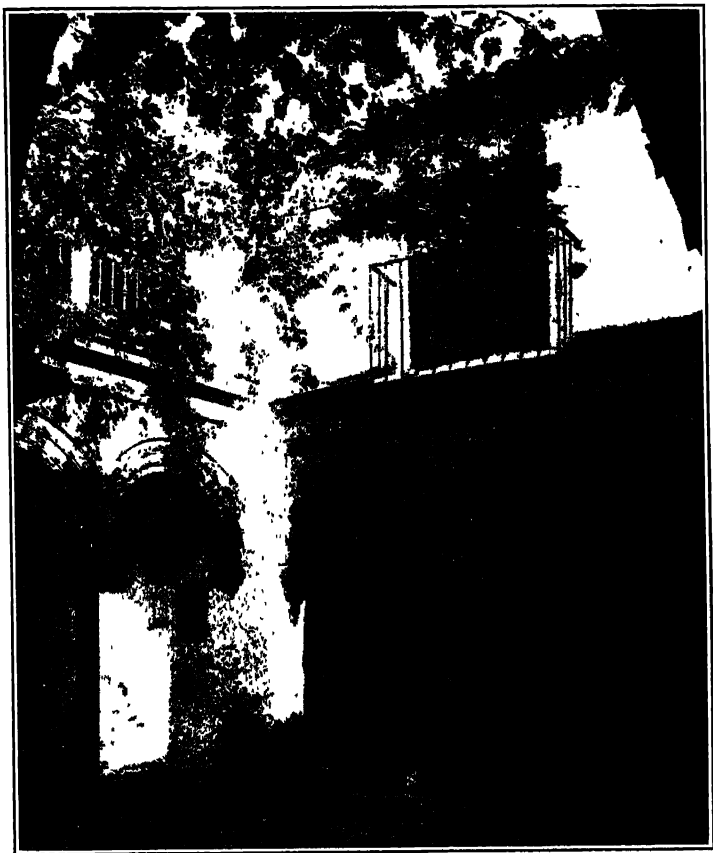
here there are quaint little streets to wander through : no high houses in Ronda, but low ones with windows barred with wrought iron railings, fashioned in strange devices and deep cut escutcheons over stone doorways, shew the arms of noble families who lived here. The houses on the edge of the cliff have iron balconies, literally hanging over the plain ; it must be wonderful to live one's life out in such a house suspended in mid-air, with the sky for a roof and the mountains for a wall, and the coloured plain as a carpet for one's feet !

Miranda of the Balcony lived in Ronda, and I think I could live very happily there too ! There is another charming hotel of the country house order, with a terraced garden, and I remember its beds of gay flowers and huge borders of white iris standing like sentinels all along its stone terraces. I remember, too, going out one moonlight night with a Spanish friend to visit an old priest, who was said to have some fine old candlesticks to sell. We found him playing chess under the plane trees in his garden with one of his seminaries, and he insisted on us sitting down and drinking a cup of chocolate while he talked to us. The moonlight was so clear, no other light was necessary, and he told us he played chess in the garden almost every night in summer without needing artificial light. Ronda is sufficiently far south to enjoy the real southern night, with that very dark blue sky and brilliant starlight which is a revelation to northerners. It may have been the altitude or the unusual clearness of the atmosphere, but one could see for miles across the plain to the far off villages on the mountain sides with their twinkling clusters of lights.

Recognising, in one of us at least, an enthusiastic stranger, the abbé told us romantic and mysterious legends of the town, of the huge cavern under the cliff, where the old Romans had a temple to Mithras, and where all the priests were turned to stone for permitting the temple to be destroyed ; of a later tradition, still believed in villages on the plains, that Venus herself appeared as a beautiful woman at the time of the grape harvest, and that the men upon whom she looked went mad for love of her. Not far from Ronda is an old battlefield, the famous Campox de Munda, where the sons of Pompey were defeated by Cæsar, and where, according to popular belief, one can still hear the clanking of Roman armour and the cries of the charioteers.

M. le curé would have told us endless stories of the Moors, I am sure, but my friend, talking chess with the seminar, happened to speak of a much discussed gambit, whereupon he lost all interest in everything else, and insisted on it being shewn to him. He sent for more chocolate and that favourite quince sweetmeat something like Turkish delight, and there we had to sit till he learnt the new gambit ! I shall always remember that moonlight night in Ronda and sitting in the abbé's garden till nearly two o'clock in the morning, with the sound of the rushing river in my ears and the moonshine flickering through the leaves of the plane trees. He gave me a handful of white iris when at last we insisted on leaving and excused himself profusely.

" You have made an old man very happy, Madame, by listening to his stories," he said, " and I have so seldom the pleasure of playing chess with a stranger !" But nothing would induce him to sell his candlesticks !



COURTYARD OF CASA MONDRAGONE RONDA

The main street of Ronda is a most animated thoroughfare. I was there once for the feria, which is held at the end of May, and is one of the most characteristic fairs of Spain. The peasants come in from the mountains, from distant villages on the plain and from the mills and vineyards all round. The street is thronged with traffic, and nowhere have I seen such fine mule-trappings, such ornamental saddlery and stirrup cases, such gaily embroidered saddle-cloths and bags.

Ronda is the centre of a district of horse-breeding, flour milling and fruit-growing estancias, and the main street is packed at fair time with all sorts and conditions of men. The peasant women sometimes wear an old-fashioned costume, which I have seen nowhere else—a short sleeveless coat of lamb's wool, the fur worn inside, and the leather dyed in colours and stamped in patterns, and a full woollen skirt in vivid stripes on a black ground. The elder men wear the silk handkerchief bound tightly round the head, one end hanging over the left ear, and a big sombrero. The handkerchief is so tightly bound over the head that it is difficult to tell whether it is silk or dark hair till you notice the hanging end.

Close to the bridge on the cliff edge is the Casa del Rey Moro, with a splendid terrace overlooking the Tajo, from which there is a giddy view down into the cutting gorge. Here is the Mina, a sort of underground staircase of three hundred and sixty steps, leading right down to the river, which steps are said to have been cut by prisoners of the Moors, who forced their captives to cut the steps out of the solid rock, for fear of a water famine in times of siege. There is another flight of steps leading down from one of the private houses—No.

5, I think—from the end of which one gets a full view of the rocks at the bottom of the gorge. One can return by the old Moorish gate, the Puerta Arabe, and up a long and narrow path outside the old Moorish walls and the Alcazaba, now used as a college, but once an old Arab palace.

I saw my first bull-fight at the bull-ring in Ronda, and although I have seen others since, I have never forgotten that first corrida, or the impression it made on me; the others have not changed it, but simply deepened it.

No one will ever come near to understanding the Spanish nature until they carefully watch the audience at a bull-fight, for here the Spaniard is perfectly natural and is so vividly interested that he takes no notice of being observed; he shews his emotions in an open and childlike fashion, and there is not the slightest doubt that he is most thoroughly enjoying himself. You have only to turn round and look at the faces when a horse is badly gored and see how many people put up their field-glasses to see it better; not all cruelty by any means, just vivid interest. One can only conclude that the Spanish people go to the bull-fight as the old Romans went to the colosseum; they enjoy seeing a fight between an animal and a man, only they like to see the man win, and so the animals are handicapped so that the man always does win, or very nearly always. But they like a good fighting bull; indeed, a cowardly bull who will not fight is hissed and jeered at, and the harder he fights, the more horses he gores, the fiercer his rushes and charges, the better they like him. It can only be explained by admitting that strange and terrible strain of cruelty lying deep down in all human nature, which, it would seem, can only

be worked out by evolution and development, and which lingers in southern nations, in countries of hot sun and arid deserts, far longer than in others. Indeed, one must not think of a bull-fight in terms of northern thought, or from a prejudiced point of view at all.

It is difficult for a northerner to grasp what moods heat and sunshine, vivid colouring and monotonous droning eastern music and the indolence of life in a southern country can induce ; and as difficult, perhaps, to understand how each of these has its necessity for a sharp, stinging antidote. The antidote is always provided, too ; thus in the soft drowsy perfume of the flowers here you constantly scent the pungent acrid smell of box and eucalyptus ; in the dreamy rhythm of dance music you get the sudden harsh clash of castanets and tambourine ; among the vivid, garish colouring you have the black dresses and mantillas of the women, and, as contrast to the courage and skill of the toreador, you have the cruelty that gores the horses and kills the bull. But one must recollect it is not only cruelty which the crowded arena is enjoying and gloating over. That part certainly is the "prick" to stimulate the interest and create the contrast ; the great thrill is the watching of the toreador and his "quadrille," who certainly take their lives in their hands every moment they are in the ring, for bull-fighting demands courage, intelligence, strength, judgment and agility in the very highest degree. The toreador is trained to a pitch of perfection ; he diets himself astutely, over-indulging in neither meat nor drink, and making an absolute cult of physical fitness.

Indeed, he requires all this, as he is matched

against an animal in the finest physical condition, trained to fight, and much stronger than he is. When one exclaims to a Spaniard that one hates seeing the horses gored and wishes that part could be left out, the reply is always : " That could never be, for the bull must be exhausted by a previous encounter before he meets the toreador, or he would have an unfair advantage with his much greater strength ! "

But let me picture the arena as it looks before the bull-fight begins. Imagine a round open circus, like the colosseum in Rome, with tiers of seats and boxes all round the sandy arena. These tiers rise to the top of the walls and are covered in by awnings of wood, or striped linen, for there is no roof. A bull-fight always takes place in the afternoon, so one side of the ring is in shadow and the other in full sun, the former being most sought after, but the sunny side is always packed with poorer people, for no Spaniard minds any inconvenience when watching a bull-fight ! In the centre of the shady side is the president's box, and on either side of this stretch tiers of boxes, filled with the beauty and fashion of the town and with strangers, visitors, soldiers ; everybody who can possibly buy a ticket or get an invitation. These boxes are very gay, for the Spanish women wear the white mantilla at a bull-fight, with the prettiest dresses and the highest combs they possess. The gorgeous Spanish shawls are not worn in the boxes but are taken off and hung over the front, in the manner that eastern people hang coloured rugs over a balcony ; the deep silk fringes of the shawls sweep down, and the wonderful colouring makes a line of blues and greens and scarlet and white all round the tiers.

If colour excites, as Barrés affirms, then the audience in the arena is in excellent condition before the fight begins, in addition to which the smell of the sandy arena, hot with the blazing Spanish sun, the scent of the flowers which everyone is wearing, the music of the band and the strange fluttering of hundreds of fans which never cease, all create an extraordinary form of suppressed excitement. Everyone is waiting—waiting.

The solitary thing that is ever punctual in Spain is a bull-fight, and as the clock strikes the hour one of the great gates in the arena opens and the procession marches in—a really splendid sight! It consists of the band of toreadors who are to fight, with their “quadrilles,” the men who excite the bull, and various assistants, grooms and mulemen. The strictest etiquette prevails in the bull-ring, and the procession is carefully arranged, the principal toreadors in their gorgeous costumes walk in the front, the others in a line at the sides, the picadors on horseback behind, and the stream of grooms at the back.

The toreador’s costume is so well known I need hardly describe it. In brilliant knee breeches and bolero of coloured silk, heavily embroidered with silver or gold, stockings of thick pink silk, the strange black toreador cap with huge pompoms, the swathed silk sash, and the well-known cloak of embroidered silk, lined with deep rose or geranium red, he is a figure of imposing splendour. The picadors wear special trousers of yellow leather, a kind of thick wash-leather, very heavily padded, for they are going to be thrown from their horses again and again, and very possibly gored themselves. If a celebrated toreador is going to

fight, the whole arena rises as the procession comes in, cheering and shouting with true Spanish enthusiasm, and it really is an inspiring scene, the sun shining on the brilliant colours and glittering on the gold and silver embroideries, picking out the lances of the picadors and lighting up the vivid faces of the audience.

Each toreador has gone into the little chapel attached to every bull-ring and put himself under the protection of Our Lady and his patron saint before coming into the ring, and they, perhaps, of all the brilliant assembly, alone have grave and serious faces, as befit men about to fight. The procession walks slowly round the arena, the toreadors saluting the president as they pass his box, and all take their allotted places against the walls, where at intervals screens of wood are fixed sufficiently far from the walls to give them a narrow passage of safety should the bull be very wild and charge others than the particular toreador with whom he is fighting.

When all have taken their places and the quadrille to engage the first bull have gone to the side of the arena and are in position, the second gate slowly opens and the whole audience strain forward to watch the bull appear.

This is a great moment, and there is breathless speculation. Will he be a good bull? Will he fight? Or will he be sullen and dull and need teasing—or, maybe, will he be a coward, and refuse altogether? The first moment of true excitement has come—to my mind—when the hundreds of eyes are fixed on those open gates, waiting for the first bull to appear!

Sometimes he comes out quite slowly, bewildered and dazed by the glaring sun, the noise of the band

and the cries of many voices. This kind of bull advances quietly, scenting danger, and it may be he will even turn and go back ; but the gates are closed quickly behind him and the men are already around him, trailing their red cloaks in front of him on the ground, enticing him into the centre of the arena. Sometimes he rushes out in a black rage, snorting, pawing the sand and ready to charge anything he can see. This is the true fighting bull, and a murmur of approbation goes up from the whole audience when such a bull appears.

The toreadors and their quadrilles who are not going to fight retire behind their wooden screens, so as not to distract his attention from the team about to fight him, two of which go forward with their cloaks trailing to bring him into proper position to charge the horse on whom is the picador with his lance fixed, ready to strike the bull a deep wound in the shoulder, so that his blood may flow. As soon as the horse is near enough for the bull to recognise his enemy he charges, and it is for the picador on the horse to manipulate his steed so that the horse receives the charge in the best position—under the right foreleg—in which position the picador is best enabled to drive home his lance right into the bull's neck, just above the shoulder. To be effective this wound must be deep and the blood flow freely—a feeble prick is no use at all. The bull generally lifts the horse on his horns, dropping him as he feels the lance going into his own shoulder ; the horse falls over, the picador usually underneath, being immediately drawn out by the grooms, while the bull is attracted to some other part of the arena by the men with their red cloaks. If the wound is deep

enough and the bull is bleeding freely, this first act of the fight is at an end ; but if merely a slight wound has been given another picador attacks the bull and the same method is pursued until a sufficiently severe wound has been inflicted. One of the chief features of modern fighting is the incompetence of the present day picadors. The good picador could often get a good lance thrust in at once, unless the horse shies or any of the hundred and one chances occur to change the nature of the fight. For instance, the bull may suddenly gore the horse in a position in which the picador cannot possibly strike him, or he may turn and charge one of the men standing near, or he may refuse to charge at all ! No one ever quite knows what the bull may do, and no two bulls ever do just the same thing, so the interest is intense. If badly gored, the horse is taken out of the arena and another brought ; if killed outright, he lies where he falls till the end of the fight. If the picador is hurt before a proper wound is inflicted another picador takes his place, as it is essential that the bull is properly lanced and loses blood, or no toreador in the world could ever wear down his strength. This is the truly dreadful part of the whole bull-fight, and strangers never look at it twice, though the native audience enjoys it throughout.

The second act is the planting of the banderillas, which is done by the toreador himself and is an act calling for the greatest skill and grace. The banderillas are round canes, twisted with coloured ribbons, and having a sharp stiletto in their ends. Six are generally put into the back of the bull's neck, just below the shoulders, and must be put in so firmly that he cannot shake them out. The

toreador takes one in each hand, holding it by the extreme end, the stiletto pointing towards the bull, and gradually advances towards him on tiptoe, coming slowly right up to the bull, waving the banderillas like wands. The grace and agility of the toreador is in no part of the whole fight so characteristically displayed as in the planting of the banderillas, and the audience watches and criticises his every movement with the appreciation and understanding of connoisseurs watching a fine fencing match. There are innumerable positions for planting the banderillas ; some "call" from behind the bull, but in the usual method the toreador advances right in front of the bull, waving the sticks before his face, and even touching him with them. When the animal lowers his head to charge, the toreador steps slightly to the side and plants the banderillas in the bull's neck as he rushes past him. It is thrilling to see how near he must remain to get them in properly ; indeed it looks to the audience as though the bull were upon him ! Everyone holds their breath as the bull charges ; an audible sigh of relief goes up as the great beast thunders past—the banderillas firmly planted in his neck—and the toreador standing a hairsbreadth at the side ! Here is always the danger that the bull turns and recharges, as a good fighter usually does, but the espadas are waiting with their cloaks to distract him. As each pair of banderillas are successfully planted ringing cheers go up, and at a very fine piece of work, hats and flowers are thrown into the arena.

This is to me the finest and most exciting part of the fight. The finesse and skill needed are immense ; the toreador is quite close to the bull

all the time, sometimes touching his face and constantly standing direct in the line of charge, stepping a few inches aside as the infuriated animal bears down on him. At each charge he is so close, so dead in front, that it seems quite impossible he should not be thrown as the animal rushes upon him, yet he is left standing on what seems the very spot the bull charged over! When the six banderillas are successfully planted the second act is complete, and the third and final phase—the killing of the bull—takes place. Before this begins the toreador advances to the president's box and salutes, throwing his toreador's cap to one of the attendants—which is the sign of the end—as all toreadors kill bareheaded.

He gives up his cloak and takes from his chief espada the red scarf, which he wraps round his right arm and hand, concealing the long rapier with which he kills. By this time the bull is worn with loss of blood from his lance wound, wearied with rushing about the arena and infuriated by the pricks of the banderillas in his neck. He has become bewildered, too, by his many wild charges at what apparently never was there, and he stands quiet between his rushes, uncertain what to do. It is here that the brilliant toreador thrills his audience by taking strange mad chances: he kneels down in front of the bull, and sometimes even strokes his face. The experienced bull-fighter can gauge at this moment, I am told, precisely how tired the bull is, how much more it needs to bear him down to the point where his enemy can stand in front of him, sighting his rapier to the exact spot in the forehead into which he must thrust it to kill.

The air is tense with excitement, for of course

the judgment may be in error, the bull may suddenly make another rush—and then nothing can save the toreador. It was at such a moment that the famous Joselito—one of the most brilliant toreadors who ever lived—was killed a few years ago. But this seldom occurs; the toreador seizes his moment, with unerring knowledge he gauges his distance, and this time it is the man who charges the bull! He rushes in upon him, burying his rapier to its hilt in the brain as the animal lowers his head for the counter charge, and if the sword thrust is absolutely true the bull dies almost at once; but this is exceptional, for many good strokes have to be repeated, death not being always instantaneous. To me the death of the bull is almost the most disagreeable part of the whole show. He is quite worn out, and often walks away as if to die by himself, the toreador and his men walking after him. Just before he dies the bull generally kneels down and then collapses, rolling over, and there is great shouting as the toreador pulls the rapier out of his head.

The tension is broken, the arena is alive with shouts and applause, the great gates swing open and a team of mules gallop in and drag the dead bull away, men come in to rake and sand the arena ready for the next bull. The band plays and everybody breathes quietly again, laughing and recovering from their excitement. As many as six bulls are an afternoon's average, the fight lasting from 2.30 till 5.30 or 6.

In the Ronda bull-ring an additional thrill is provided by the circling vultures which hover over the ring, attracted by the smell of the blood. They say the bodies of the dead horses are thrown over the cliff for the vultures, but I have seen one

swoop right down on to a dead horse in the arena, and the espadas had quite a difficulty in driving it away.

Possibly bull-fighting is more discussed in Spain than any other subject, and, after seeing several corridas, one understands dimly why, although no words can explain it. There is what someone has called the "abominable attraction"; you hate to see and yet must look again!

The great corrida in Madrid on Easter Sunday is a popular fiesta attended by the King and Queen of Spain and their whole court and is the official opening of the bull-fighting season. They say the Queen never looks into the arena, and I am sure they are right, for I have watched her often looking through her field glasses right across the arena—never into it. The Church has always been violently against bull-fighting and has done all it could to suppress it, but apparently without the slightest success. It seems too deeply engrained in the very blood of the people. But time, that great readjuster, is altering conditions. Last year there was a strike of bull-fighters, and for the first time within living memory there was no Easter bull-fight in Madrid. Then ill luck has attended the most famous toreadors of late years. The brilliant Joselito was killed in front of his great friend and rival, Belmonte. No toreador or espada who saw this dreadful death was able to fight again for some time, and several of the younger coming-on men had their nerves completely shattered. Thus it is that there are no young toreadors of great promise fighting at present, and seemingly none to succeed to the old traditions, so the corridas to-day are but poor exhibitions of the great skill which characterised those celebrated days of Carmen's time.

CHAPTER VII

BOBADILLA

From Ronda to Malaga by train one goes via Bobadilla, that big railway clearing house which is so typically Spanish. It is the great southern junction, and all the trains from north to south and east to west run through it. Yet there is no hotel, no inn ; not even a village. A small cluster of huts and a big untidy and draughty railway restaurant is all this junction provides for the comfort of passengers. But all who travel in Spain are compelled at one time or another to spend hours here, and it certainly provides an interesting study of Spanish life and customs. No train ever connects, but you may sit in the restaurant which adjoins the main platform and amuse yourself vastly by watching the people. The stationmaster at Bobadilla is a man of great dignity and imperturbable good humour. He speaks a little French, and I have watched him explaining difficulties, smoothing down irate travellers and calming desperate foreigners with urbane politeness. I remember well the anger of a British lady who had travelled from Madrid with three small trunks, of which one had miraculously disappeared when she arrived at Bobadilla. She fumed and fretted and seemed on the point of tears when the stationmaster was called in.

"How many had you when you started?" he asked.

"I had three," she said, "and now there are only two."

"Well, well," he said, soothingly. "Two out of three to arrive safely, that is not bad, and the third will doubtless arrive by the next train. You will have it to-morrow or maybe next week." And with this the poor lady, new to Spanish travel, had to remain content.

The restaurant with strange little alcove rooms and a huge table in the centre is a stirring scene always and a noisy one at that ; waiters rush about opening bottles, serving coffee—wine, aguardiente—drawing corks, mixing salads, rattling knives and forks and plates and cutting up those cold, skinny chickens Spaniards always seem to eat on a journey. People hurry in, demand coffee—wine—an omelette—bread, cheese or fruit, snatch it up and rush out again to consume it in the train, which calmly waits a good hour, during which they would have had plenty of time for a comfortable meal. No train that I have ever seen leaves Bobadilla under twenty minutes, and most of them remain about an hour. The experienced traveller goes into the restaurant, sits quietly down and orders a good meal, having first interviewed the head waiter and impressed on him the necessity of being told when his train is going on.

The head waiter at this restaurant is another remarkable man. He never seems to sleep, for I have seen him on duty all day and all night, and although he looks shattered and cadaverous he always manages to get what one wants, and he never forgets a face. He rejoices in the name of Agostino, and to hear him called all the time by various habitual travellers who know him is at first quite startling. It was he who told me many

travel stories ; and indeed his experience of the foreign travel public must be remarkable. " All foreigners live in such a hurry," he remarked, pensively, while pouring out our wine. " I should think no food could agree with them, they eat it so quickly ; and they can certainly never taste wine, for they drink it down at a gulp and hurry out to catch a train which is not going certainly for twenty minutes."

I remember one terrible journey when we spent twenty-six hours in Bobadilla station restaurant without being able to get away. We left Ronda in heavy rain ; indeed, it had rained off and on for nearly three days, and the morning we left it settled into a steady downpour. The train from Ronda to Bobadilla was two hours late, but it was too wet to go back to the hotel, so we waited at the station and played patience, getting to the junction eventually about four o'clock instead of at two. Here we were told that the main train to Malaga was itself five hours late, so we had not missed the connection, as we feared we would do. Agostino hailed us as old friends, and it was on this occasion that I saw him disheartened and cross for the first and only time.

" I do not know what has happened to our climate," he said, despondently. " These heavy rains flood the country ; all trains are disorganised and my restaurant is full of wet and discontented people."

The restaurant was indeed cold and draughty and wet, but Agostino produced one of those large pans of charcoal, put it under the round table at which we sat, and told us to rest our feet on the edge of the pan. He then placed a huge velvet tablecloth over the table, arranging the sides over

our knees as a rug, which kept all the warmth in.

"Soon you will be quite warm, Señores, and I suggest hot coffee and aguardiente."

The hot coffee part of his suggestion being accepted, we were soon warm and comfortable and able to observe the trials of less fortunate travellers. It was at the time of the Spanish war in Morocco, and entire regiments of soldiers were being sent across to Africa. By typical Spanish methods these regiments were dumped in Bobadilla, where they changed trains which, in equally typical Spanish fashion, never by any chance connected. Thus the station was full of a seething mass of soldiers, seeking shelter, food and drink ; and Agostino's crossness was explained. There was complete confusion about transport, enormously complicated by the wet weather and floods. No one seemed to know when any train was due, into which platform it was coming or whether it would really arrive at all. Here it was I heard a delightful story from an Englishman who had been travelling in Andalusia.

"I was on one of those smaller railways," he said ; "and I defy anyone to imagine how slowly we went. Not only did we stop a good half-hour at every station, but we kept stopping constantly all down the line. Evidently something was wrong, and I asked the engine-driver, who passed our carriage smoking a cigarette, what it was."

"A bull has got on the line, Señor," he said, "and they are driving it off."

"In a short time the train proceeded, but stopped again in about twenty minutes."

"Another bull on the line, I suppose," I said, sarcastically, to the engine-driver, who again passed our window.

"No, Señor," he answered, with a smile, "the *same* bull has again got on to the line!"

After waiting about three hours we suggested to our Spanish friend, who was fortunately travelling with us, that he should enquire privately from the stationmaster what really was the matter, and he returned from this interview with a despondent face. The main train from Madrid, for which we were waiting, was coming all right, though late, but the floods had affected one of the culverts between the tunnels on the line down to Malaga, and it was uncertain if we could proceed that night.

"Then we had better go back to Ronda," we exclaimed, with one voice.

"Alas, my friends," he said, "I fear we can't do that, for the line between here and Ronda is now under water; we can't get back."

"Then we must have a car," we protested. "We cannot sit in this restaurant all night."

But no car is forthcoming at Bobadilla, where there is not even a cottage or hut with a spare room.

"Even if we could get a car," Don Moyano said, "I fear the roads are by now—"

He could find no words for what he thought the roads might then be, and we well understood.

Meanwhile the restaurant had become quite impossible. It was thick with the smoke of innumerable cigars and cigarettes, crammed with masses of wet humanity and smelt horribly of cooking and stale tobacco. Outside the whole station was a seething crowd of soldiers, and the rain descended in an unabated stream. One of the ladies of the party decided that she would be thoroughly ill if she remained in that atmosphere

any longer, and Don Moyano was told he must arrange something. He consulted with the stationmaster, and it was eventually decided that when the Madrid train arrived we should be given a carriage in it for the night, and this eventually was secured.

Two soldiers were posted as guards at the doors to prevent others entering; the engine was borrowed from the train to bring odd carriages, cattle trucks, anything that could shelter the men, into the station. I shall never forget those unfortunate troops; they filled the carriages, they lay in the corridors, they were even huddled under the carriages, anything to get out of the pouring, drenching rain! I imagine that some happy day this big junction may perhaps be roofed in!

It was on this night that Agostino excelled himself. He offered us the charcoal brazier in the carriage; he came hourly to the door, pressing upon us hot soup, coffee, aguardiente, anything we fancied, and he wrestled all night long with the relays of cross, miserable, despondent men.

"I have made gallons of coffee during the night, Señores," he said, in the morning, "and I have no more left, but I have kept just a little for your breakfast. But alas there is since long ago no milk."

It was twelve o'clock next day before the train was able to proceed, and even then when we came to the damaged culvert it had not been repaired. We climbed down out of the high foreign carriages and dragged such small hand luggage as we could carry for three-quarters of a mile down the line, past the damaged culvert to where another train was waiting to convey us on to Malaga, while the passengers from that train walked up to the

Madrid train which had brought us and which took them back to Bobadilla. I have gone through Bobadilla very many times since that episode, but I always remember the night we passed there with sentries guarding our carriage doors, the rain rattling all night long on the roof and the soldiers encamped under the trains and in the cattle trucks.

But this is a very unusual experience in Spanish travel. The courtesy which one meets as a rule is exceptional; no one leaves or enters a carriage without a formal greeting to those within it, and no Spaniard will take food or drink without offering it to his fellow travellers—true it is seldom accepted, but it is often pressed heartily upon you, and when this is done it is gracious to taste a small portion—a few grapes or raisins or a biscuit or sweetmeat—as an act of politeness. I once saw a tiny Spanish boy about five years old, I should think, who was travelling with his father, climb down with great difficulty from his corner seat and gravely offer each person in the carriage a piece of the cake he was eating.

The method of registering luggage in Spain is peculiar. Even in big stations like Seville one man appears to attend to it, seated in a little wooden box and entering every registered article in longhand in a book. The travellers line up in a long queue before his box, a rail separating them from their porters, who attend with the luggage to be registered on a hand barrow on the other side of the rail. As each piece is entered in writing the porter hands it to a packer, who ties it round with string, the knots of which he seals with lead and stamps with the railway stamp, the official in the box waiting till each piece is tied and

stamped before entering the next item. All this takes time and is done most leisurely, and as the train from Seville to Madrid is usually crowded, and each passenger registers from two to six pieces of luggage, it is necessary to be at the station a good hour or more before the train starts. But luggage is now scarcely ever lost, so here the "slow but sure" method is an improvement. Should a loss occur, the missing trunk is usually traced and forwarded, and it is always a matter of great surprise to Spanish hotel proprietors and stationmasters that one should be in a hurry for it.

"But you have one hat with you, Señora, so why trouble yourself," I was told when trying to hurry the search for a missing hatbox once in Toledo. "It will come in a few days, and you cannot wear more than one hat at a time!"

CHAPTER VIII

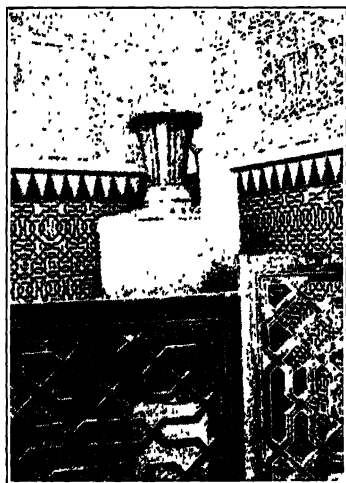
GRANADA

Granada and its wonderful palaces have been so often described that however little one knows of Spain this famous place at least is already pictured in the imagination.

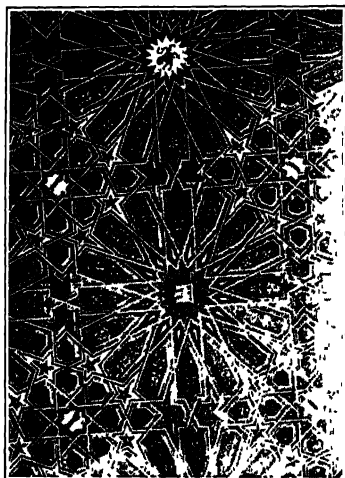
But the pictures one makes in one's mind, whether built from the descriptions of those who have seen them or from what one has read about them, are apt to be quite different from the reality. To me, at least, Granada was not in the very least what I had imagined. To begin with, the Alhambra is not a palace, but a series of palaces, where the Moorish rulers lived the life of great eastern potentates with their families, the whole court, many nobles and armies of servants and defenders. It was the last great stronghold of the Moors in Spain and was held by them for two and a half centuries, after the rest of the country had been re-conquered by its own inhabitants. The sultans of Granada came from the most famous Moorish families. The Almoravides and the Almohades both ruled here and were routed by the famous Mahomet I., who founded the Nasryd dynasty. He left the Albaicin, which had been the royal seat, and founded his own palace on the Alhambra Hill, and his descendants all added to it. Mahomet it was who coined the famous saying: "There is no conqueror but the Most High God," and used it inscribed as his motto all

over his courts and palaces. Sultan after sultan succeeded him ; his grandson, Mahomet III., built the mosque ; Jusuf I. built the Court of the Myrtles, the baths, some of the most famous towers, and probably finished the enclosing wall. Mahomet V. built the Court of the Lions, the royal harem, and his successors, Mahomet VII. and VIII. both added courts, palaces and towers. During these reigns Granada prospered exceedingly. It is said that the inhabitants of the province numbered something like four hundred thousand and the wealth of the country increased by leaps and bounds. The land was irrigated, and vineyards, olive groves, oranges, lemons, pomegranates were planted and flourished.

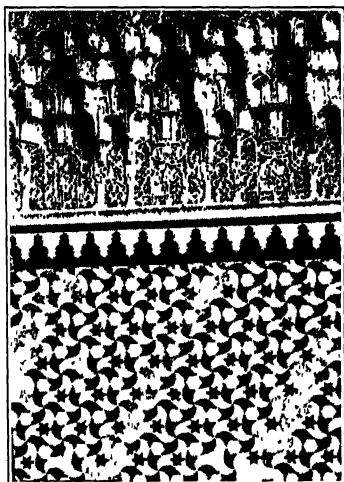
There is so much to see in the Alhambra that the youthful tourist must be quite bewildered, but I counsel no one to come here with guide-books or couriers and try to see it in a set time. Spain is not the country to be seen in this fashion and least of all the Alhambra at Granada. Let us sit instead for awhile in the Hall of the Two Sisters and think over all that has happened here. Imagine the recesses filled with their great Moorish divans and couches, the white marble floor piled with cushions. Here rested the princes during the noonday heat and feasted their eyes on the wonderful decoration, said in this hall to have reached its climax. The lower portion of the wall is covered in strange eastern design, with red, blue and green azulejos, the colours still brilliant and fresh ; then comes a veritable lacework of stucco, said to have been designed by special artists brought from Damascus, and considered one of the most wonderful pieces of Saracen work in Spain. The glory of the hall, however, is its



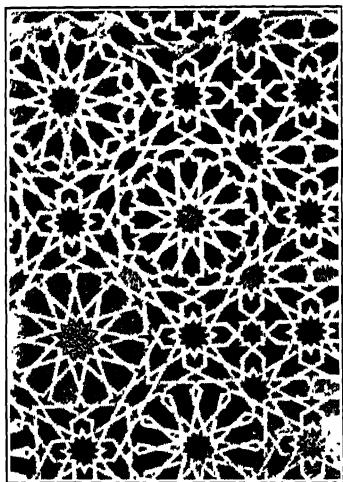
THE ALHAMBRA VASE



SPECIMEN OF MOORISH DECORATION



SPECIMENS OF MOORISH TILES



ceiling, a dome formed of honeycomb vaulting. There are said to be over five thousand cells in this great dome, one cell supporting another, and forming fantastic patterns, the whole being one of the most remarkable roofs in the world. Over the two entrance arches are latticed balconies, from which the ladies of the harem could look down upon their lords and watch the entertainments given, themselves unseen.

In a corner of this room stands the famous vase of the Alhambra, which was said to have been discovered full of gold. It is enormous—over four feet in height—and is enamelled in blue, white and gold. Somehow it looks as if it were meant to hold treasure, and one wonders what were the feelings of those who found it, hidden away in one of the old dungeons, brought it to light and rediscovered its treasure.

Right through the arched doorway we can pass to one of the largest courtyards, the celebrated Court of the Lions. Here again, if you are in tune, history will repeat itself to you. There in the centre stands the fountain, famous in verse and legend, where the twelve marble lions hold up the basin in which water splashed and sprayed in the sultan's time just as it does to-day. A kind of cloister surrounds this oblong court, made of many marble columns, and there are two delicious little "orange" pavilions, the domed roofs of which represent an inverted half orange. Here one can sit and watch the bees and butterflies hovering over the flower beds, or the water dripping in the alabaster basin. This courtyard has suffered less by the ravages of time than any part of the whole Alhambra. These lions have seen many lovely faces, many strange scenes

enacted ; none more terrible than the massacre of the Abencerrages in the next court into which they gaze. Here in the Hall of the Abencerrages more than thirty nobles of that family were beheaded.

This is one of the most tragic stories of the Alhambra, and if it ever happened at all, really concerns Aben Hassan, the father of the famous Boabdil. This prince committed the great folly of old age and took to himself a young wife, by whom he had two sons ; the lady was ambitious, wished her own sons to reign and consequently worked upon the fiery and suspicious character of the old king, embroiling him with his other children, with his heir, and even subtly suggesting the infidelity of his once favourite wife, Ayxa la Horra, the mother of Boabdil.

She managed to poison the mind of the king completely by insinuating that a wild passion existed between his queen and one of the princes of the Abencerrages. The tree in the gardens of the Generalife, a cypress six hundred years old, is still shown as the place where their meetings took place. There seems but little doubt that this is an entire myth, for the mother of Boabdil was a virtuous wife and wise mother ; the old king, however, in his mad jealousy believed it all and determined on a terrible revenge. He sent for the whole family of the Abencerrages, who assembled at his order in one of the chambers adjoining the court now called by their name. One by one they were taken through the arched doorway into the court ; one by one their heads were struck off into the marble fountain, which still stands in the centre ! Small wonder that the inhabitants of Granada believe this court to be

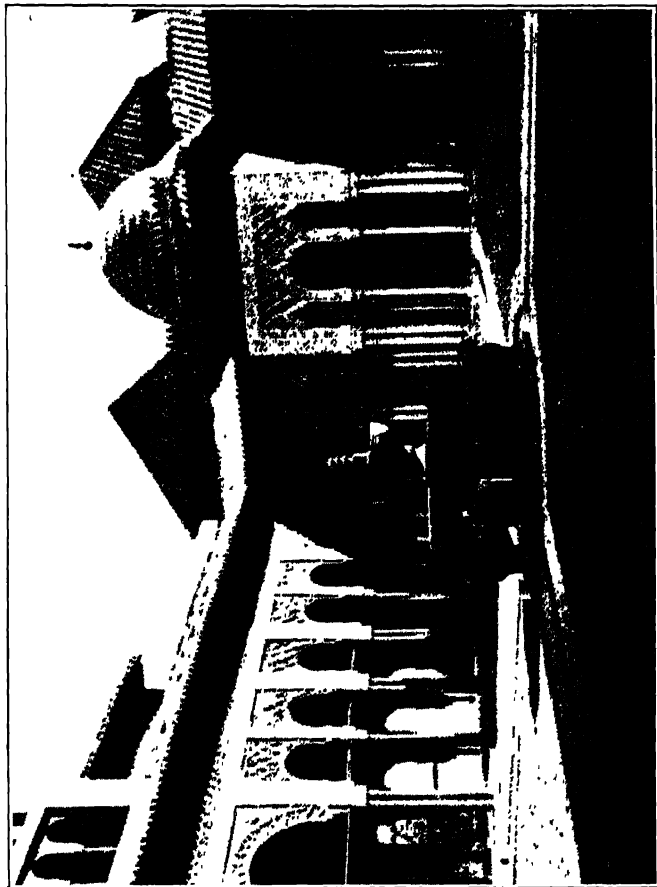
haunted ; that strange groans and cries are said to echo round the tiled walls at night. The dark stains on the floor are said to be the print of their blood, which can never be washed off.

The Queen Ayxa was confined with her son, Boabdil, in the tower of Comares, from whence she lowered him by means of knotted scarves from a balcony, and so he made his escape.

Poor Boabdil ! He was named " el Zogobi," or the unlucky, and he seems to have well merited the title. His father hated and imprisoned him, and it was only by the cleverness of his mother that he escaped death ; later on, when he succeeded his father as heir, his whole reign was stormy, for he had constant dissension with his uncle, who disputed his claim to the throne, with his half-brothers and with his great enemy, Ferdinand the Catholic, who waged constant war upon him, and in the end took Granada from him, exiling him to Africa, where he died in obscurity, fighting for some native prince. His departure from the Alhambra must have been a melancholy affair ! He petitioned the Catholic kings that the gate from which he made his final exit should be walled up and that no one should ever enter or leave it again, and this last request was granted. A short way across country lies the hill called La Cuesta de las Lagrimas, the Hill of Tears, from which Boabdil turned to look his last at the princely home he was leaving. It is said that tears streamed down his face, and that his mother, that devoted soul who had done so much to help him, embittered by misfortune and the prospect of exile, taunted him with the remark : " You do well to weep as a woman over what you could not defend as a man."

Boabdil's troubles did not end even with his death, for history in some unaccountable way has been perverted to hand him instead of his father down to posterity as the murderer of the Abencerrages. He certainly was unable to defend his kingdom, and with him the Moorish reign in Spain comes to an end, but there is no possible proof that he was responsible for this great massacre or for any of the atrocities which posterity associates with his reviled name.

But we are not nearly finished with these princely courts. Through the Hall of the Mocarabes we come to the Court of the Myrtles or of the Fishpond, as it is often called, the centre of which is filled with the sunken pool of bright green water enclosed in marble, with hedges of clipped myrtle down either side. The view here is charming, for one looks right down to the arches which form the one end over which rises the tower of Comares, the other end being an arcaded gallery with delicate pillars and graceful arches. The Moorish love for water was always insistent, and aqueducts brought the water that fills these fishponds and fountains from the Sierra Nevada, that lovely range of mountains, whose white-topped heights form such a fine background to every view from the Alhambra. No words can describe the magic of this palace of palaces ; its gardens, its fountains, its courtyards and halls must speak for themselves. Everywhere are Arabic inscriptions singing its praises. "How beauteous is this garden," runs one of the verses, "where the flowers of the earth vie with the stars of heaven ! What can compare with the vase of yon alabaster fountain filled with crystal water ? Nothing but the moon in her fulness shining in the midst of an unclouded sky."



THE COURT OF THE LIONS, ALHAMBRA GRANADA

The Generalife was the summer palace of the Moorish kings, and its gardens remain in my memory as the loveliest pleasure I have ever known. There is the same magic about them which hangs round the Alcazar Gardens in Seville, and one can spend day after day happily there, dreaming of the strange events of which they were the setting, of the Moorish beauties and princes who inhabited them, and of the poems and sonnets written in them. They are indeed inspiring gardens, with their avenues of cypress, cedars and elms; their terraces gay with heliotrope, geranium, oleander; and roses growing luxuriantly over the balustrades and along the walls. Again, by Moorish design, there is running water everywhere, and again one realises what the vegetation of Spain becomes with plenty of irrigation; it is a riot of scent and colour, like the setting of a dream garden, with the snowy Sierra Nevada in the background. Endless are the legends of both the Alhambra and the Generalife. Sitting on the sunny terraces, one listens to them in the same fashion as the court at Bagdad listened to the tales of Scherazade. It was my good luck to hear them from an old and romantic inhabitant of Granada, and to hear them in their proper setting. Here on summer afternoons, sitting under the shadow of the cypresses, they sounded like tales from the Arabian Nights, and one realises how believable are these stories if heard in the right place under proper conditions. Most of all I liked the story of the prince Armed Alcamel, of whom it was predicted that all would go well with him if he could be kept from all knowledge of love—even from hearing the word—till he was of mature age. His father, the Sultan of Granada, built a palace for

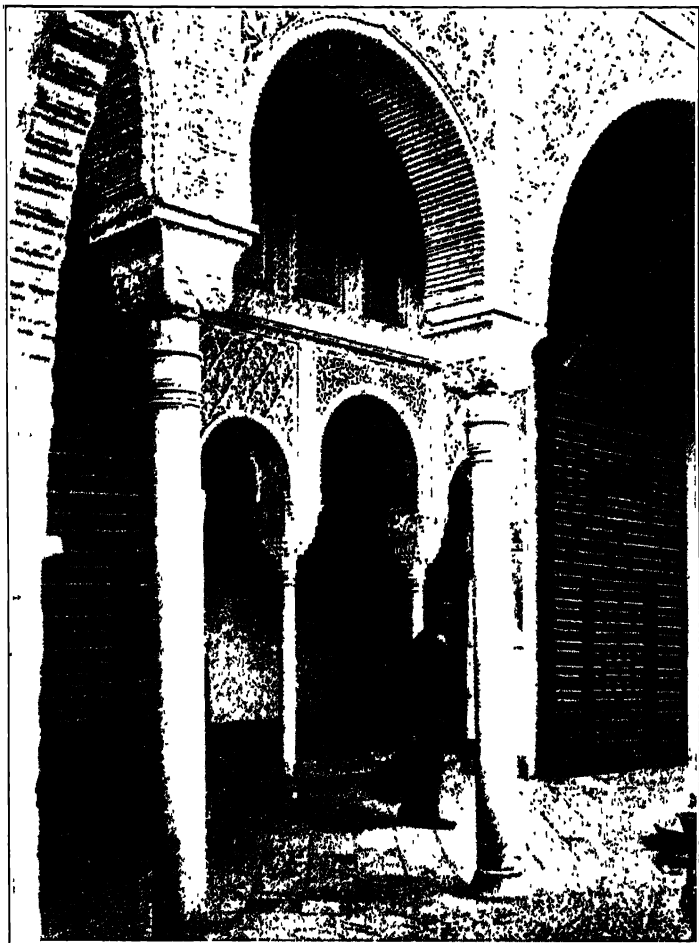
him on the hill above the Alhambra, called the Generalife, surrounded it with a lovely garden and enclosed all in a high wall. He should thus never see a female face or even hear the name of love, for he has given as governor and tutor an aged Arabian sage, who taught and interested him till he was nearly twenty. Then the prince became restless and weary of confinement, and to distract him his tutor taught him the language of the birds, in which he became greatly interested, and so enthusiastic that he soon learnt to talk to them. His first friend was a hawk, but he would only talk about adventure ; his next friend was an owl, who only cared for metaphysics, and soon bored the prince more than his tutor. Next he conversed with a swallow ; and soon, spring being arrived, all the birds talked of love, sang of love, lived for love ! The prince was very curious, and wondered what this strange thing love, of which he knew nothing, might be. But no bird would tell him, though he questioned them all, till at last a dove, separated from his mate, disclosed the great secret to him, who in return granted the dove his liberty. In gratitude for this the dove returned some weeks later bringing news of a most beautiful princess, whom he considered might explain the meaning of the mystical word more fully to the prince than he himself could do. The prince sent his poems and love sonnets embodied in a letter to be carried to the fair one by the dove. Day after day passed, and the prince began to think he should never see the dove again, when one evening the bird fluttered into the palace and fell dead at his feet, an arrow shot through his heart. Lifting him up and stroking his feathers, the prince found a tiny locket round his neck, containing the picture

of a most lovely lady, but who she was or where she lived he knew not, and the bird being dead, could not tell him. Then began the great search for this beautiful princess, whom his heart told him fate had destined for him. His friends the birds all promised to help him, so he disguised himself and prepared for a long journey ; collected all his jewels and escaped from the palace the same night. His friend the owl conducted him to a raven who lived in Seville, a great magician, who told his fortune and planned his journey. He sent him to a parrot who lived in the Court of the Oranges in the Mosque of Cordoba, whom the raven told him would guide him to his beloved. The parrot took him to Toledo, proving to him that his locket contained the portrait of the lovely daughter of the Christian King of Toledo, the most beautiful princess in all Spain.

The adventures that befell the prince are too numerous to recount, but he gained access to his beloved eventually by disguising himself as a doctor and healing her, she having read his sonnets and verses and having fallen sick of love for him. Instructed by his friend the owl, the imaginary physician would take no fee, but begged of the king her father a small box of sandalwood containing a green silk carpet once owned by a famous Moorish king. The King of Toledo was astonished at the modest fee required, and at once gave him the sandalwood box containing the carpet. This the prince spread out before the princess, saying her cure would be completed if she stood upon it. Her couch was lifted on to the carpet and the prince approached her, giving her his hand to raise her, so that she stood, her feet pressing the carpet. As they stood there hand in hand he told

the king that he was no physician, but a prince who had long loved his daughter who fully reciprocated his passion. As he spoke the carpet rose in the air and conveyed prince and princess to the Palace of the Generalife, the King of Toledo and his courtiers gazing after it in astonishment. The prince and his princess lived long and reigned happily in Granada. They made the owl prime minister and the parrot master of ceremonies of their court.

After I was told many times that if I spent all my days at Granada in the Alhambra and in the gardens of the Generalife I would become surfeited with beauty and intoxicated with romance, I began to believe it might become true, so somewhat reluctantly I tore myself away to spend some time in the cathedral, that church which many connoisseurs consider one of the finest in Europe. Adjoining it stands the royal chapel, much revered by Spaniards as containing the tombs of their great Catholic kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, who lie here in their mausoleum, a fitting monument to those sovereigns, whose final act for Spanish glory was the complete recovery of their whole country from the Moorish kings. Their tomb is enclosed in a magnificent railing of the famous gilt iron-work, and the two figures are really royal in appearance. They lie crowned and robed on huge slabs of marble, Ferdinand in full armour with the Order of St. George across his breast, the queen in royal robe and wearing the Cross of Santiago. To the left are the tombs of their daughter Joanna and her Flemish husband, decorated with the Order of the Golden Fleece. There is much to see in the cathedral, of which the royal chapel and mausoleum are quite independent. On



THE PALACE OF THE GENERALIFFE, GRANADA

the steps of the high altar are two large kneeling figures of wood representing the Catholic kings, as ever interceding heaven for their beloved country. The carving of these figures is superb ; the faces said to be exact portraits.

Busts, tombs, paintings and many chapels containing relics are all to be seen, amongst the most interesting of which are the jewels of Isabella, her crown and sceptre and a pathetic empty casket, which once held the gems she sold to pay the expenses of the first voyage of Columbus.

Just outside Granada lies the town of Santa Fe, which has a strange history. In the final siege of the Alhambra, when the armies of the Catholic kings were encamped outside the walls of Granada, a great fire arose and burnt to the ground the royal tents, luxuriously hung with velvets, brocades and silk curtains. Isabella and her children barely escaped with their lives, and it was then that Ferdinand decided such precious lives could not be left to such strange chances, and as the siege appeared to become a lengthy proceeding the Catholic kings decided to build a town where their court and family could be safely housed. Thus arose Santa Fe, which the army and courtiers greatly desired to call after the queen herself, but she, with her intense religious feeling, insisted on calling it by its present name, Holy Faith.

Granada is a garden city, and over the house roofs you constantly see the tops of trees and palms. From the heights of the Alhambra every house looks to possess a patio with shrubs and flowering trees. There are broad streets and narrow lanes, Moorish towers and balconied houses, but to me every moment was wasted that I did not spend in the Moorish palaces. I was quite happy

to spend all my days there, and each time I go it attracts me in the same fashion.

The last time I was there my romantic Spanish host insisted that the only way to appreciate the Alhambra was to see it by moonlight, and night after night by special favour we all went up after dinner and wandered round the courts. The trickle of the fountains, the continuous song of nightingales, the drifting scent of the flowers, the strange and unusual form of the palaces in the moonlight, almost convinced me that prince Armed's green silk carpet had indeed transported us to some land of fairy where the Moorish idea of complete loveliness " *Belle comme la lune dans sa quatorzième nuit* " was the ideal description of beauty.

CHAPTER IX

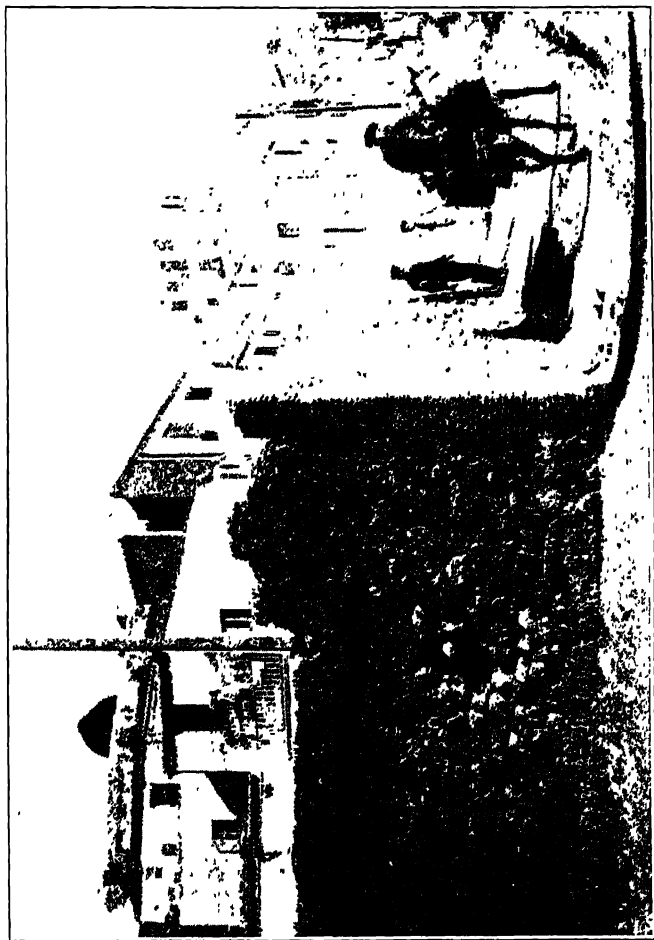
ELCHE AND VALENCIA

Anyone truly bent on adventure may well exercise it by taking coasting steamers up to the southern towns of Almeria, Cartagena, Alicante and Valencia. The steamers are not bad, but the weather is very uncertain, and there is often a heavy swell. Poseidon was not kind to us when we started the trip, and the coast of Spain unfolded itself in a panorama of grey, dreary looking hills with rugged cliffs of brown rock, the abomination of desolation in bad weather. One is seldom out of sight of the shore, and it all looked so dark and sinister as we steamed into Alicante Harbour that we began to regret having come at all. One lands in tiny boats, for some special reason I never understood, and we had great trouble about the small hand luggage with us. But next morning the sun shone and Alicante seemed well worth a visit. It is a strange eastern-looking little town, flung against the mass of brown rock, which has a dilapidated looking castle on the top, a line of fortifications round it, and at the bottom a glittering necklace of white houses with an avenue of really magnificent Asiatic palms that lie behind the harbour.

I do not know quite what it is that gives Alicante its essentially eastern look. The metallic green of the palms, the whiteness of the houses, swaying blue water in the bay or the fringe of silver water

outside the mole. Here barelegged fisher boys are drawing up the sardine boats and unloading the glittering fishes direct out of the nets on the sand. This is Alicante on a sunny morning. Later in the day, when the sun got very hot, the palms cast deep blue shadows and the narrow streets were pleasanter than the front. The houses go gradually up the hillside on a slope, one side of the street being often higher than the other and connected with steps. There are women and children, girls and fishermen always on these steps, the women making lace or knitting or carrying their jugs to the well, the men mending nets or just lounging, looking out to sea with that far off look in their eyes one so often sees in the eyes of fisher folk. Towards evening the fishing fleet came in, and we went out to the mole to watch the boats. They were like a great flight of white birds coming to rest at night and folding their wings; the sails were gradually taken down, and only the slender masts remained outlined against the background of the harbour. I wonder why Mediterranean fish always look so much more glittering and metallic than any other. We saw huge baskets of fish carried away, shining and gleaming like flakes of mother-o'-pearl. The nets are hung up to dry, one by one twinkling lights appear on the boats, and the whole harbour became a shining mass of phosphorescence, with the boats lying quietly swaying on its surface.

The second day at Alicante was spent in an excursion to Elche, thirteen miles away, and famous for three special reasons; it was the original home of that wonderful bust now in the Louvre called "The Lady of Elche," which experts date from about 440 B.C. This has been the



A COAST-TOWN IN SOUTHERN SPAIN

admiration of all connoisseurs, and has been illustrated and written about many times. It is considered to be one of the finest specimens of primitive Iberian sculpture existing, and it certainly is a very remarkable head. In his essay on the *Art and Industry of Primitive Spain*, Professor Pierre Paris, of Bordeaux, describes it in the following lines :

“In her enigmatic face, ideal and yet real, in her living eyes, on her voluptuous lips, on her tranquil and severe forehead are summed up all the nobility and austerity, the promises and the reticences, the charm and mystery of woman. She is Oriental by her luxurious ornaments, and by a dim technical tradition which her sculptor has preserved in the modelling ; she is Greek, even Attic, by an inexpressible touch of genius which gives her the same strain as to her sisters on the Acropolis ; she is, above all, Spanish, not only by the mitre and the great wheels that frame her delicate head, but by the disturbing mysticism of her beauty. She is indeed more than Spanish ; she is Spain itself ; Iberia arising still radiant with youth from the tomb in which she has been buried for more than twenty centuries.”

■ The second reason why Elche is famous is for its remarkable palms ; they lie all round the town, some one hundred and fifteen thousand fine trees with “ their feet in the water, their heads in the fire of heaven,” as the Moorish saying has it. The town of Elche stands on a hill in the centre of this wonderful grove—squat, flat-roofed white houses huddled together round the blue-domed church at the top. From the roofs—indeed, from the streets of this hill town one has a strange view, groves upon groves of palms planted in avenues radiating

out from the town, losing themselves in forests on the outskirts and finally fading away into what looks like a white desert, a dry arid plain stretching far into the distance. It is at once remarked that Elche is as truly an oasis as though it lay in the great Sahara. Between all the groves run streamlets of water, carefully controlled by an elaborate system of dykes and water-gates. Were it not for these, the desert would presumably eat up the oasis, but this is one of the few places where the irrigation of the Moors has been carefully preserved. The sun beats down so mercilessly on the town that the distant gleam of the sea is refreshing, and one hurries from the streets to the palm trees for a little shade. Under these trees one finds the most luxuriant vegetation—laurel, arbutus, oleander and geraniums grow to great heights; camelias, heavy-scented tuberose and stephanotis flourish out of doors. The orange trees are among the finest in Spain, and here grows that delicious sugar cane orange which has such quantities of sweet scented juice. Wandering about these palm groves one can easily lose oneself, and it is a very strange and attractive place, utterly unlike anything else in Europe. The song of the women washing clothes in the river at the foot of the town drifts about the palm groves as a kind of echo and is re-echoed again by a still more typical eastern melody that at first I could not place at all. It seemed to come from the tops of the trees, which, indeed, it actually did. It turned out to be the old Moorish date-pickers' song, and we saw many of them up in the tops of the palm trees, sitting across the great leaves and gathering the ripe fruit, while their mules with huge panniers waited for it below. I have been

since told that this same melody is still sung by the date-pickers in the oases of the Sahara.

The palms are looked after by special gardeners, and require very careful attention. The male palms flower in May, and the pollen is sprinkled by the gardeners over the female trees, which bear fruit only every other year, each tree yielding about eighty pounds of dates. This fruit, though sweet and delicious, is much smaller than the Sahara date. The palms at Elche are far more famous for their leaves than for their fruit. It is from them that those huge palm leaves come which are blessed by the bishops and are bought by every pious family in Spain to tie on to their balconies or on to the iron gratings of their windows. These blessed palms are supposed to protect the house from lightning, and one seldom sees a good house in Spain without one of these palms attached to some part of it. The leaves are bleached on the trees by being carefully bound up and all light excluded; each large tree is subjected to this treatment once in every four years.

The third attraction of Elche is a strange little Passion Play—the only one in Spain—which takes place every year on the Eve and Feast of the Assumption and is played in the church on the hill. The church is specially prepared for the occasion, the sacred images being removed and a blue curtain with angels on it stretched like a canopy across the main aisle. It is a strange and primitive little play, in which the Holy Family, angels, apostles and innumerable saints take part. The robes and decorations are crude and vivid, and by a strange arrangement of mechanical ropes and chains these figures ascend and descend in the most astounding manner. We could make nothing of

either the story or the music, but were told that it had been miraculously sent to Elche in a chest from the sea, which also contained the very old image of the Virgin now enshrined in one of the chapels. Legend has it that as long as the play is performed Elche's palm groves will flourish. If the play is given up Elche ceases to be an oasis and will be claimed by the desert again. It is a strange and rather sinister little town, in spite of its sunny palm avenues and its bright flowers, and as we drove away it seemed to me that it might vanish altogether like a desert mirage.

It was good to come back to Alicante, with its modern steamers in the blue bay and the huge sea-gulls screaming round the fishing boats in the inner harbour.

Another coasting steamer took us up to Valencia from Alicante ; this time in lovely weather ; and we entered the fine harbour on a glorious morning. The town itself lies two miles and a half from the sea, and we rode down a long, dusty and very bad road, with trams running up one side, to the town itself.

At first I felt frightfully disappointed with Valencia, that great stronghold of the Moors and the final home of the famous campeador, the Cid. It seemed a dingy town, and it trailed away into seemingly dingy suburbs. Crossing its old bridges, one looks in vain for a river ; but finds nothing but a dry and sandy river bed, so broad and vast that soldiers are drilled and horse fairs are held in it. The river itself, the Turia, is a slender stream that plays hide and seek among the sandy hillocks. Between the imposing embankments erected to enclose this absurd rivulet is a stretch of a quarter of a mile, and on either side there are elaborately

laid-out gardens and boulevards. In olden days the Turia was a broad full river, which is the reason for its long and broad bridges, composed of huge blocks of stone with images of the saints and the Catholic kings to decorate them. From the second bridge, called the Bridge of the Law, one of the old gates of the town is seen, the Torras de Serranos, with its fourteenth century battlements and its life-size statues of the apostles. Here one enters the old town, a conglomeration of tall houses and narrow streets, through which some broader streets are now being opened and a circular boulevard is built on the site of the old wall. It seems to me very difficult to find one's way about in Valencia, but there are certain landmarks for which one can always make. One of these is the famous bell tower called the Miguelete, from which there is a magnificent view over a vast stretch of country and whose celebrated bell, first hung on the Feast of St. Michael, regulates the irrigation of the fertile plain of Valencia. A popular legend tells us that the Cid, the day after he had wrested Valencia from the Moors, brought his wife and daughter up to this tower to shew them the earthly paradise he had conquered with his valorous troops. The Miguelete figures largely in all Valencian history, and its inhabitants to-day regard it with patriotic love and devotion. "To lose sight of the Miguelete" means exile and nostalgia to a true Valencian, and the saying has passed into a proverb. From this tower one has a complete view of that lagoon outside Valencia called the Albufera, which is the last trace of the lake and marshland which once stretched right down the Valencian coast line. From this come some of the waters which irrigate the famous

Huerta, that fertile plain which stretches from Valencia to Gandia, where one garden and orchard follow each other so closely that it is miraculous evidence of what irrigation can do for an arid and sandy soil.

This wonderful system of irrigation is controlled in an interesting manner and is administered entirely by the peasants themselves. The controlling body is called the Tribunal of the Waters, and meets every Thursday in open conclave in the large porch of the cathedral door. It is an interesting sight, and every visitor to Valencia waits to see it. Just inside the Puerta de los Apostoles iron gates screen this conclave, where sit on six old leather chairs, each with the name engraved on the back, and each member of the tribunal is called, not by his own name, but by the name of his district. They are all dressed in the black peasant clothing, silk handkerchief and Valencian sandals of the district; they are all old men, and the eldest is speaker. He declares the tribunal open, and one by one the peasants who have any complaint to make or grievance to bring forward come inside the railing and plead their cause before the peasant magistrates, whose decisions are never questioned and whose words are absolute law. No records are kept, and the rules are handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another; but absolute justice can be depended upon, and the verdict is never disputed.

Another celebrated landmark in Valencia is the Lonja, or old Silk Exchange, one of the most beautiful buildings in Spain. It was erected in 1483, on the site of the Moorish Alcazar, and the Moorish influence is particularly strong, especially in the wonderful columns in the Great Hall. It

is said that the Moorish idea of the arch came from forests of palm trees, with their slender tall trunks and the huge fan leaves forming a dome-like arch above. This idea is superbly illustrated in the interior of the Lonja at Valencia. The great hall is empty, save for a few tables and chairs, and thus one has an uninterrupted view of the fine proportions; these beautiful columns sweep up into the ceiling in fan-like vaultings, giving an impression of height and a beauty of line indescribable. The windows and doors follow the same fine lines, and are carved with an extraordinary depth and delicacy in pictures of forest life; trees, animals, birds and hunters are all faithfully rendered and so deeply carved that each figure is complete in itself. The evident joy which inspired the ancient artists who decorated this building—the loving detail which they lavished on their work and the extraordinary richness of their design has created a wonderful treasure which, even after all these centuries, gives the greatest pleasure to everyone who looks at it. The carving is in excellent condition, and repays lengthy study. But it is the general effect of the whole that is so completely satisfying—that quickening of the blood and thrill of pleasure produced by gazing at a perfect piece of art; it was always difficult to drag oneself away from the Lonja; I should have liked to spend many more days in it.

Coming out of the main door, you walk straight into the market, and the market in Valencia is a very fascinating place. There is a market square, but the market itself overflows into all the adjoining streets, up and down both sides of which gay little booths are set up. These have brilliant

coloured awnings—the market women are in coloured blouses, selling gaily coloured wares—a perfect orgy of colour : yellows and pinks and reds and blues and greens ; some faded and some bright, all woven into a vivid and living tapestry. I loved the old markets in Spain and the queer jumble of old things and new things one finds there ; indeed, one never knows what one will come across. Cheek by jowl with old rosaries and silk vestments comes common modern lace or garish prints, and beside ancient silver candlesticks and fans are old rusty hinges and nails, leather purses and strings of modern beads. Every market woman carries a fan, particularly at the food stalls, and fans herself and her wares indiscriminately, for the heat is great and the flies a perfect pest. I once asked a Spanish lady how many fans she had. “ Only about nine dozen,” she told me, and thought it very few !

The use of the fan is quite automatic in Spain, and the “ lesson with the fan ” as told in verse is absurdly unnecessary. No Spanish woman needs teaching how to use her fan ; she knows it instinctively, and one sees little girls using it with exactly the same movements as their mothers. It is born with them, and comes quite naturally ; just in the same way in which the Spanish woman fixes a flower in her hair. She seldom looks in a glass to do it, knowing by instinct exactly the place where it will best suit her.

The narrow streets are quite confusing and the shops, like those in Malaga, in the old part of the town, all have open fronts, the people working in the open, sitting behind a table or on the steps of the entrance itself. Nearly all the shops are dedicated to a special saint and have the image in

a little wooden shrine above the door. Where no saint is patron a stuffed bird is usually set up as a mascot, for birds are luck-bringers in Valencia. In one street we counted nine different birds over different shops—a turkey, a duck, a guineafowl, an owl, a dove, an eagle, a quail, a hawk and even a homely sparrow.

The churches in Valencia I found extremely disappointing. Most of them are built on the sites of mosques, and the cathedral itself is said to stand on the ruins of a former temple to Diana, which was then succeeded by a Christian church, then a mosque and is now again a Catholic church. One can well imagine it has been all these things from its appearance, although its two finely carved doors and some of its rose windows are good. It was most unhappily restored in 1760, a coating of plaster of Paris was used to cover up the fine old carvings. Most of this was gilded later on, and the general effect is deplorable. Both the churches of San Andrés and San Nicolas have been treated in the same manner. Valencians love rococo decoration and much gilding, and have completely spoilt many fine buildings by their ostentatious taste in this regard. Worst of all is the Church de los Santos Juanes, in the big square, where the painting of the lily and adorning of the rose is carried to the last point of absurdity.

In the Colegio del Patriarca, where ladies are only admitted to the tiny Church del Corpus Christi—and then only if dressed completely in black and wearing mantillas and accompanied by a gentleman—a solemn Miserere is celebrated at the high altar at ten thirty each Friday. This is a strange and dramatic ceremony, much beloved by the citizens of Valencia, and it used to be quite

difficult for strangers to see it. Those who succeed receive a broad, black-edged card, giving strict injunctions about dress, the wearing of black mantillas and the necessity of being absolutely punctual as to time. The doors are closed to the minute, and no one is let in after under any pretext; all must kneel during the whole Miserere, at the end of which the great picture over the high altar, Ribalta's Last Supper, is lowered by machinery, and one sees in its place relays of dark curtains. One by one these curtains are drawn back, a special chant being sung for each curtain, and when the last curtain disappears we see in its place a huge wooden crucifix with a figure of the dying Saviour upon it. Still kneeling, the worshippers are shown the sacred relics, and the curtains are gradually drawn again. There are some good pictures in the churches, but they are difficult to see, as everything is so very dark.

The Valencians put their buildings to strange uses, for while the picture gallery was once a convent, the old Palacio de la Diputacion or Chamber of Deputies is now a tobacco factory, said to be one of the largest in Spain and employing three thousand women. One must add in justice, however, that another tobacco factory is being built, and when it is finished, if that day ever arrives, the old Chamber of Deputies will return to its former grandeur. This tobacco factory is much more interesting than the one in Seville, about which, by the way, there is an amusing story. Over the main entrance of this factory is the figure of a flying angel holding to his mouth a long trumpet. The sculptor was asked when the angel would blow on his trumpet and his answer was: "When a virgin enters the building."

Sevillanes assure one with a smile that the trumpet has never yet been sounded !

The tobacco factory at Valencia is a strange sight on a summer afternoon ; huge halls with long tables and dozens of women seated at them ; the heat is tremendous, the scent of flower which every girl is wearing in her hair, of tobacco leaves, of massed humanity makes up a strange mixture, and there is an unceasing hum of talking and laughter. Most of the girls have a cradle at their feet, which they rock gently all the time their busy fingers make cigarettes, and little blame is attached to the unmarried mother in a Spanish cigarette factory. She has only eaten of " Mary's lilies," and has to work as usual harder than ever for having done so.

The library of the university is very interesting and contains a fine natural history museum with specimens of all the birds of the Albufera—the Valencians love all birds—and a very comprehensive collection of manuscripts and missals from old monasteries.

To see Valencia at play one must watch them on the day of a bull-fight, which absorbs all interest and excuses any laxity in work. From here two members of our party were obliged to return suddenly to Paris, and we interviewed the agent of the Societe de Wagons Lits. He was a tall thin man, with a very distraught air, and it took a great deal of time to bring him down to earth. At last he grasped the fact that two sleepers were wanted from Madrid to Paris for the 3rd of May, five days ahead.

" But I cannot book them here," he said.
" You must get them in Madrid."

" There will be no time for that when we reach

Madrid," we told him. "Can't you telephone to Madrid and reserve them?"

"Yes, I suppose I could do that," he said, thoughtfully. "I will telephone this afternoon."

We wrote it all down carefully on a sheet of paper for him. *Two sleepers from Madrid to Paris on the night of May 3rd.*

"Come in to-morrow morning, Señores, and I will have them ready for you."

As we were leaving the office he ran after us. "But how are you going to get to Madrid?" he asked.

"We are going to Madrid by motor car," we told him.

"Bueno, Señores; come on to-morrow, the tickets shall be ready for you."

Next day when we went in he beamed upon us. "All is arranged, Señores, I have the tickets. Two sleepers from here to Madrid on the night of May 3rd."

"But where is your paper?" we asked. "We want the sleepers from Madrid to Paris, not from here to Madrid. We told you we were going there by car."

"Yes, yes, I remember," he said. "You must pardon me, it is my mistake. I will telephone this afternoon again to Madrid and make the correction. You will have the right tickets to-morrow; please call in the morning."

Next morning we returned and again he smiled upon us. "All is now in order, Señores, and here are the tickets. Three sleepers from Madrid to Paris on the night of May 2nd."

"But really, Señor, it is too bad. We shall miss getting any sleepers at all if any more mistakes are made," we protested. "Where is the paper we wrote for you?"

Crestfallen he produced the paper and read it. "*Two sleepers from Madrid to Paris on the 3rd May.*"

"A million pardons, Señores, a million pardons. It is entirely my fault, and I will at once remedy it. You shall sit in my office here while I telephone now to Madrid for the tickets." Then in a burst of confidence he explained the situation. "You must really forgive me, but the son of my wife's cousin is one of the espadas in the corrida here on Sunday, and every moment some friend comes in to ask me about him!"

The bull-ring in Valencia is the largest in Spain, and is said to hold seventeen thousand people, which is three thousand more than even those of Seville or Madrid. On the day of a corrida the streets are empty, the shops are empty, the little cafés are empty, and there seem even fewer beggars about. The whole population stream out to the bull-ring, and it was here that I saw the famous toreador, Trajinerito, fight last year just a few weeks before his death. The story is an instance of strange coincidence, showing how a brave and fearless man, who had spent most of his life in killing ferocious bulls should himself have been killed while trying to save a small dog from a brute who was tormenting it.

At the big gala corrida at San Sebastian, which winds up the season there, we saw the toreador Nacional and all his men appear decorated with black crepe bows and in extremely gloomy spirits. The news flew round the bull-ring in a flash—poor Trajinerito had been foully murdered the evening before in a quiet and respectable street in Zaragoza at nine o'clock on a summer's evening, several witnesses present, who presumably were helplessly

looking on, as the murderer escaped and was never traced. Trajinerito had gone out for a walk after dinner and had seen a man fiendishly ill-treating a small dog. As he passed the poor animal managed to escape from his tormentor and took refuge between Trajinerito's legs. The bull-fighter stooped down to examine the dog and seeing how injured it was admonished the other man. The word "admonished" was used by all the papers next day in reporting the case, but given the circumstances one can well imagine the lurid nature of the admonition.

The torturer, rather drunk, remarked pleasantly that it was all the same to him if he killed a dog or a man and immediately ran a knife into the toreador's ribs. Trajinerito, owing to his stooping position, was unable to draw his own knife or defend himself in any way; the blow pierced the heart, and the witnesses carried him dying into a chemist's shop. A strange death indeed for any Spaniard, and particularly for one of the best banderilleros of the last five years.

Bull-fighters are intensely superstitious, and the gloom this news cast over that last corrida cannot be described. It was just as well that it was the end of the season, for probably none of them could have fought again for some time after.

Valencian history is full of delightful stories of that famous conquistador, the Cid, who took the town from the Moors in 1094, after a twenty years' siege. He entered the city through the gate ever afterwards called the Puerta del Cid, and, remembering his knightly oath of mercy to a fallen enemy—an oath more honoured in those days by its breach than its observance—and also being enormously relieved by the raising of the long

siege, he sent back word to the Moorish chieftain that the enemy was permitted to bury its dead.

The caliph was so touched by this unexpected kindness that he sent two beautiful slaves to the Cid as a present, who however returned them with a message that his own beloved wife was waiting to welcome him and that he could not be bothered with any other women. On entering the town the Cid's first act was to nail the Cross to the tower Albufat in honour of the city being again under Christian rule. This tower remained till 1865, when the vandal authorities of the town pulled it down to make room for some new building. Here the great warrior lived till his death, some five years later, and history tells us that the same devoted wife kept the news of his death a secret from the Moors, defending the town herself for a considerable time. But the Cid had left a special wish that his body should be laid to rest in San Pedro de Cardona, and his wife determined his wishes should be carried out. The news of his death had leaked out, and the troops of Moorish warriors, encouraged to think their great enemy was dead, were again besieging the town, and lying outside its walls, making ready for an attack. The dauntless Ximena concocted a plan by which her husband's will should be fulfilled. She had his corpse arrayed in full armour and mounted on his famous war horse, Babieca, and so out he rode by the same gate, supported on either side by the Bishop Geronimo and Gil Diaz, and followed by his wife and all his warriors. This sight was so terrible that the Moors fled in terror, allowing the strange funeral procession to proceed undisturbed and leaving the richest booty and treasure on the field. This booty the noble widow gave

to the poor, and hence comes one of the most famous ballads of the Cid, which tells how he, even after death, wrung such treasure from the infidels that even the poor became rich !

The Cid's war steed, Babieca, is amongst the most famous horses ever sung, and many ballads have been written in her honour. She was brought into the Cid's death chamber to take leave of her master, and is said to have stood quiet as a lamb with tears falling from her eyes, watching her beloved master die. The Cid left instructions that no one else should ever mount her, and that she should be cared for as a princess as long as she lived. This famous steed was credited with miraculous powers. She never did wrong and needed no guidance ; she it was who, carrying her master through Toledo after his conquest of the town, suddenly fell on her knees when passing one of the mosques. It is obvious that some precious relic was here concealed, and special search was made. As the wall was being pulled down a light suddenly shone forth from a buried niche and here was found a crucifix, which had been immured for safety before the Moorish invasion, the lamp before it still miraculously burning.

This is said to be the terrible figure with long real hair which now hangs on a crucifix over the high altar in the Church of El Cristo de la Luz in Toledo.

CHAPTER X

“ LITTLE ROCK ”

The car had gone to Madrid, and was to be three weeks away, as the chauffeur said it would take all that time to look her over after these long journeys, so we decided to go across to the Balearic Islands, just nine hours from Valencia. I had always had a great wish to visit Majorca, as everyone I knew who had been there described it as an earthly paradise, and I knew that many people had gone for a short trip and returned year after year. There are four islands, Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza and Formentera, but the largest and only important one is Majorca. It is one of the pearls of the Mediterranean—a gem of an island—and its inhabitants call it all sorts of pet names—the Fortunate Isle, the Golden Land, the Happy Country and, most favourite of all, “ Little Rock.” In far off days these islands were the magic isles of the Hesperides to the ancient Greeks, where the golden apples came from, and certainly Majorcan oranges give one an entirely new idea of that ordinary fruit. The quickest way of reaching Majorca is from Barcelona, but there is quite a good service from Valencia, the boats running three times a week. One arrives in the early morning; and the first sight of land I saw were shadowy purple blue hills standing up against a faint pink sky. The sun rising behind the islands soon flooded them with light, and gradually the land revealed itself more

clearly. The north side is mountainous, sloping gradually down to a sunny plain, on which lies the capital—Palma. The islands are the farthest spurs of the Pyrenees thrust far out to sea, and in old forgotten times probably joined the two continents. The islands have been far too rich and fertile country to be left in peace, and everyone coveted them. They have been Moorish, French, Spanish and English in turn ; and long before this Phœnicians, Romans, Carthaginians and Vandals all traded here, and occupied the islands for longer or shorter periods. The Moorish influence is unmistakable to anyone who knows the signs, though it is not openly shown as in the true Moorish cities in Spain. It is far more subtle, and it is the effects of it which must be deduced more than the actual signs looked for. However, it was under Moorish rule that Majorca flourished for four hundred years and established herself as a powerful land with a history of her own. Then came the great conquest by Don Jaime, King of Aragon and Lord of Barcelona, who sailed across with a huge fleet of nearly two hundred galleys and routed the Moors, annexing the islands to his own kingdom of Aragon, making the lovely town of Palma his capital and building its great cathedral, which many people like better than any other in Spain. He began the king's palace on the site of the Moorish Alcazar, and it is said he laid the foundations of the harbour. One hears much about Don Jaime I. and his son and grandson, Jaime II. and III., all of whose bones rest in the cathedral. Streets and ships are still named after them ; and, indeed, the name of Jaime is one of the special island favourites, every family possessing one member at least who owns it. The

cathedral and the king's palace stand up in one tremendous pile as one enters the harbour of Palma. This is a very wonderful natural harbour, in a lovely bay, and every advantage has been taken by the clever Mallorcans to improve it. When we entered it the whole British portion of the Mediterranean fleet was there, and there seemed plenty of room for others.

The Aragon and Majorcan kings were by no means the greatest men of the island, much as they did for it. Majorca herself produced one of the most famous men who ever lived—the great Ramon Lull. He was born in Majorca a few years after the Aragon conquest, his father being one of the knights who accompanied the King of Aragon on his war against the island, and the young Ramon had every advantage of court training, for the Aragonese court was as famous for its poets and troubadours as for its brilliant soldiers and courtiers. But he was far more than all that. He was a great writer, a remarkable mystic, a philosopher, and, for part of his life at least, a Franciscan friar. The island teems with stories about him, the best known being perhaps the story of his conversion. He began life in the usual fashion, as an exponent of knightly chivalry, falling in love with a very beautiful lady of Palma, whom he relentlessly pursued with serenades, poems and passionate attentions. He even followed her into the Church of St. Eulalie on horseback, so anxious was he to obtain speech with her, and at last she, seeing it was hopeless to restrain his ardour, gave him an assignation and then showed him her breast eaten away by a cancer. So horror-struck was the knight at such a sight that he lost all desire for life or any earthly ad-

vantage. He gave up his fortune, retired from the court, and after making various pilgrimages to noted shrines on behalf of his loved and ill-fated lady, he joined the Franciscan Brotherhood. But his courtly training had ill fitted him for monastic life, and though he never left the Brotherhood he retired from the monastery and lived for years in a cell overhanging the sea, on those lovely mountains on the north side of the island near Valdemosa. Ramon Lull's life is far too significant to be passed lightly over. Moreover, his influence on Mallorcan life and literature are far-reaching. He studied and meditated in his cell, alternating these periods with pilgrimages from land to land, preaching and teaching his own special theology. In this he was many centuries in advance of his time, for he was teaching the principles of modern psychology, which his own genius had developed from a combination of Moslem and Christian principles. His own motto—"He who loves not lives not"—was an adaptation of the saying of St. Augustine—"Love—and do what you like." And this knightly troubadour, who had put earthly love behind him, had thoroughly grasped the great psychological truth of diverting his unsatisfied emotion into another channel. He preached love, love of the highest, love for the divine, as the supreme satisfaction for all love. Christ the Great Lover was his Beloved, and every now and then he withdrew from his pilgrimages and the world and retired to his hermit's cell in Valdemosa for meditation on, and ecstatic communion with, his Beloved. Here it was that he studied the great Moslem parables, which held that all science is but divine illumination; that human love is but a symbol of divine love; that the ideal, the

spirit, can become, and indeed is, one in essence with the Beloved. Here it was that he formulated his great life work—the gift of Christianity to the Moslems, for which he spent so many weary journeys in northern Africa and for which he himself stated that he had worked forty-five years. Later on, from the college he founded in Majorca, he wrote on many subjects as well as religion; on metaphysics, astronomy, geometry, logic and ethics, as well as the more worldly subjects of horsemanship, seafaring life and statesmanship. Perhaps his best known work is *El Libro de Amiee d Amat* (the book of the friend and the lover) that very favourite book much later of St. Teresa. I hear that many treatises of his are even now being revived and translated by Spanish religionists.

Ramon Lull is buried in the Franciscan church in Palma under a huge sarcophagus, on which his sculptured figure lies, his head on a cushion and his great beard sweeping down over the friar's habit and knotted rosary. A lamp always burns before this tomb, and on the anniversary of his death when I was there the monks had brought in dozens of pots of freezia from the cloister garden and set them all round. Candles were burning on the high altar, and a mass for his soul being said. We went out afterwards into the cloisters, where a Mallorcan lady told us the story of the patriot's life and works. Although he has been dead so many centuries, he is still a living personage to the Mallorcans.

Palma is a delightful town, with two modern hotels and two new boulevards—De la Rambla and Del Borne—where there are little cafés that put chairs out under the avenue of plane trees and

where one sits to watch the passers-by. But I always preferred the long stone terraces that run along the coast like fortifications from the old Moorish palace by the side of the cathedral right out to the southern suburb of fishing huts. From here the view is extensive, looking right out to sea and across the bay to where the coastline curves southwards. The sea is a wonderful colour round these islands. I have seen it bright green, deep purple, clear sapphire blue and black as ink.

Behind the town and across the plain to the north tower up the mountains, a mass of extraordinary peaks that look ever so much higher than they really are. Behind the cathedral and the harbour and the two new boulevards lies the old Moorish town, and here one finds those old Majorcan palaces with their wonderful courtyards, more spacious and even more elaborately carved than those in a Spanish town. There is a whole series of pictures of these; each old Majorcan family house seems to have a different court, and some of the finest carving and stone decoration is lavished on the staircases and cloisters these courts contain. In one—the courtyard of the *Palacia Oleya*, I think it was—there is a very magnificent staircase and an arched loggia under which carriages can drive.

A mania for renovation and rebuilding has overtaken the citizens of Palma, and all the town is being rapidly enlarged, houses and small suburbs being built out in all directions. There is rather a nice market, where the most fascinating basket-work, lace and pottery are sold. The pottery, as usual, attracted me greatly. It is such lovely colouring, and the old Majorcan water-pot is the Greek amphora; exactly the same graceful shape.

Wandering about the old streets, we found a fascinating old curiosity shop with a wrinkled Spaniard as owner. Interested in some fans in the window we entered ; a fatal entrance, for I at least spent much of the rest of my time in Palma in that shop.

The Majorcans have a language of their own, but the owner, Jeronimo Casas, never asked us the usual question : " Will you speak Majorcan or Castellan ?" so we stumbled on in Spanish, and he managed to convey to us the fact that he had another shop or warehouse where he had far, far better things to sell.

But how to arrive at this warehouse was a conundrum, as his few words of English and ours of Spanish were not enough to convey even in the vaguest way any direction. At last he managed to tell us that if we would return to-morrow he would drive us there. Next morning found us outside his shop, looking at a strange vehicle much resembling an English dogcart, very dilapidated, with the straw mat stretched across where the floor should have been and an enormous animal harnessed to it. It *was* a horse, but it might have been anything ; the very biggest horse I have ever seen, and of a brilliant red colour. While we were gazing at this astonishing turnout Casas appeared and waved to us to get in. " English occupation," he said, pointing to the cart. He got a boy to hold the animal's head and ran round to open the door, signalling to us in dumb show not to step on the mat but to sit down on the seats from the top step. It seemed a perilous adventure, but we managed to embark. Casas got up in front and the red horse started at a kind of hand gallop. The cart may have been from the Eng-

lish occupation ; I should have judged it dated from the ark ; it had no springs of any sort and no floor, the straw mat simply serving to keep the dust from rising. Had one risked a foot upon it one would have gone through on to the pavement. I shall never forget that drive over the cobblestones, holding breathlessly on to the backs of the seats and trying vainly to remember enough Spanish to tell him to stop and let us get out. But Casas had no intention of stopping. He was awfully proud to be driving two foreign ladies about, and I must say everyone we met turned and stared at us, much to his delight. Every now and then he looked back and threw us a word over his shoulder. He kept saying, "Barbarossa," and flicking his whip over the red horse, and we gathered it was the horse's name. "A descendant of the very earliest occupation I should say," remarked my friend, breathlessly. Then Casas flourished his whip before a low, black-roofed house as we flew by. "Balearic Teatro," he shouted. Barbarossa went like the wind ; we jolted over the stones, tore round corners and galloped through narrow alleys, pedestrians scattering before us in terror, and I was just contemplating throwing myself out when we stopped before an ancient warehouse so suddenly that we were almost shot off our seats. The warehouse was an old barn filled with the strangest collection of things I ever saw, mostly furniture, and some of it quite good. There were, for instance, twenty three chests of drawers, all from the English occupation. Apparently English officers of the early eighteenth century never travelled with trunks, but always took their belongings about in chests of drawers !



A TYPICAL STREET IN MAJORCA

Then there were many wooden bedsteads decorated with the old Majorcan wood inlay, an island industry which attained great perfection and then inexplicably died out. But the chef d'œuvre of Casas' collection were hundreds of wooden and plaster saints, which I imagine he had looted from various churches, monasteries or convents when they had been dismantled. He had every variety ; dozens and dozens of the Holy Virgin and the apostles, about two hundred various saints and countless numbers of winged cherubs and fat baby angels. He could not for the life of him understand why we did not want and could not be tempted to buy a life-sized wooden image of one of his saints.

“ But you *must* have a patron saint,” he said. “ You could get him here very cheaply and present him to your church at home ! ”

But we waived all the saints aside and bought some of his chests of drawers and a couple of fine old wooden beds. He produced an “ embalador ” or packer, and it was then that we discovered Casas himself spoke quite decent French. I think that made me more furious than even the cart of the English occupation, after having struggled on in poor Spanish for days with him !

“ But why did you never tell us you spoke French ? ” we asked.

“ Of course I speak French,” he said, ignoring the question. “ I learnt it specially in Barcelona for my business ”—which is so entirely typical of Spanish trading to learn a language for the object of your business and then struggle on in your native tongue with customers who cannot speak it !

Poor Casas ! The last time we saw him, just before leaving Palma, he was driving Barbarossa

at a furious pace down to the quay, one of the largest wooden saints rattling about in the cart and a small boy seated beside him, his eyes gleaming with fear and a fat wooden cherub clasped tightly in his arms. Evidently someone else had acquired a patron saint very cheaply !

The cathedral at Palma is one of the great churches of the world. It rises up a magnificent pile above the town, dominating it, and whether you approach Palma by sea or come down to the city from the northern mountains it arrests the eye at once. It is built of Majorcan stone, which has mellowed to a rich deep yellow ; the proportions are on a grand scale, the interior being remarkable for its great height and the enormous span of its nave. It has some of the most beautiful rose windows I have ever seen, which carry a very special stained glass in all shades of yellow and orange. This gives the effect of constant sunlight, and for a Spanish church it is extraordinarily light. There are some fine chapels, the largest being the high altar chapel, behind which is a magnificent Gothic transaltar from the thirteenth century, with very beautiful mosaics in perfect preservation. I have never seen anything quite like the huge canopy which hangs over the choir stalls with its thirty-seven hanging lamps and its carved Crucifixion, the figures of which are nearly all life-size. The decoration of this canopy we first imagined to be old silk tapestry, but discovered afterwards it was parchment, painted and gilded. There is a general richness of colouring in this cathedral which is remarkable, and is furthermore enhanced by the warm yellow light which always floods it. It is not known who the archi-

tect was who originally designed it. The claims of many architects have been advanced, and it is generally ascribed to the great man who built the Church of Our Lady of the Sea in Barcelona, but nobody knows for certain. The building, however, was begun by Jaime I., shortly after he conquered the island. Except for its wonderful mellowness, it has no great look of age, and I should think it is the solitary Spanish cathedral which could correctly be described as bright. Even when covered with the purple veilings of Lent it still looked sunny and full of light and air. Its treasures are vast and the vestments and altar furnishings are quite wonderful. Even the deep black robes for death masses have decoration of crystal and silver, while those for feasts are in the richest gold brocade, embroidered in coloured silk and often stiff with jewels. The music in this cathedral is particularly good; there are two fine organs, and they give those sung masses by Eslava which one never hears anywhere out of Spain. The Easter services are most beautiful, and the procession on Good Friday which takes the Holy Body down from the Cross and lays it with reverent devotion in the tomb, where it lies watched by monks and priests till Easter morning, is one of the most impressive ceremonies I have ever seen. I remember, too, attending the solemn service of Tenebrae in this church, and shall never forget how fully the immense congregation entered into the awe of that great ceremony.

The inhabitants of Palma are deeply attached to their cathedral, which they call La Seo. It always seemed to me that there were many worshippers. It is one of the few very large churches that has an active air of joy about it, but that was

peculiarly distinct. No one could mistake the fact that the congregations loved being there and went to that particular House of God with joy and gladness.

Up through the mountains to the northern coast there are some charming little places to visit ; if you choose the month when the peach blossom is out you will find the hillsides masses of delicate colour all splashed against the grey green of olive groves and the more vivid green of young vines. It is wonderful there in early spring when—

“ hill and plain together
Grow pale, or just flush with the dust of
flowers.”

There is Valdemosa, where George Sand dragged poor Chopin up to the monastery when she thought his cough was killing him in the valley. They had the greatest difficulty to get his grand piano up the steep mountain road, yet there it still is in the Carthusian monastery that gave them shelter, and their rooms are still shown, the living room opening out on to that grand terrace that looks right down the mountain pass to the sunny plain and the sea shimmering beyond.

There is Deya, a fascinating hill town with an old church and a priest's house at the top, and a beautiful old graveyard, which was completely carpeted with flowers when I saw it. The courteous old priest who found us resting there invited us to come in and see his church with its painted walls and carved wooden altar. He was very proud of it all, and unlocked the sacristy to shew us a most beautiful silver censer in the form of a

tower with minarets. "The finest censer in the island."

There is the beautiful little town of Soller, with its bay and its fishing boats, its terraced gardens and its old Franciscan monastery. Above all there is Pollensa, most lovely of spots. It has a marble terrace and a gorgeous avenue of cypresses, and here lives Antonio Borrás, host of the Venta de Miramar, the most urbane and satisfactory of innkeepers, who owns nearly all the boats in the harbour; who grows his own wine, and whose wife is a perfect genius of a cook. Hearing we wanted to see some native dancing, he arranged a little fiesta for our benefit, and after dinner we sat in his courtyard and saw the jota and the fandango danced in the moonlight.

Antonio told us all about the two ways of cultivating the vine in the island: the *Vinas Mauro-doras* which are ploughed and the *Vinas Cavadoras* which are hoed. He knew all about fruit growing and grafting, but it was on sailing and smuggling that he became really enthusiastic. The caves in the south of the island had all been used by smugglers, he told us, and there is still a great deal of illicit trading. His knowledge of boats and sails was unique, and he was untiring in his efforts to make us understand the difference between the native boats, *faluchos* and *llautes*, which have three pointed sails and are specially designed to steady the boat in those gusty winds that rush down from the mountain so suddenly as to overturn boats in the harbour itself. The currents between the island are tremendously strong and only native boatmen can be trusted to pilot the small boats between them.

It is difficult to sum up in what lies the peculiar

charm of some places, by what special quality they make their very subtle appeal. There are more beautiful spots than Majorca—finer towns than Palma—lovelier valleys than those tucked away between its green mountains, and yet the “ Little Rock ” has a strange attraction that holds very tightly. The sun shines, the peacock-coloured water sways round it and you are never out of sound of the sea. There is not very much to do, but somehow time passes quickly. One golden day succeeds another and you are still lingering on—reluctant to go.

CHAPTER XI

BARCELONA

There is a great diversity of opinion about Barcelona, but for me it is one of the most delightful cities I know. Firstly, it is a port, and I am "*aficionado*," as a Spaniard would say, of ports ; then it has peculiarly interesting old houses, public buildings and most wonderful churches. It has a lovely climate, neither too cold nor too hot, and there is a great amount of sun. Indeed, there is always blue sky and sunshine there, flowers and trees, the wind blowing in from the sea, and cheery, smiling people in its streets. Of course, every now and then there is a big flare up, the city is put under martial law, and, I am told, the whole port is seething with anarchism. However, as far as the stranger is concerned, these are but the violent thunderstorms that break out during a glorious summer. One's movements are restricted for a few hours or a few days by them and then they pass over, leaving the landscape clearer and brighter than ever. The citizen of Barcelona has a good technique of life. He seems to have struck the happy mean. By reason of its position as one of the great ports of the Mediterranean the city is a busy centre of commerce, and yet its people have preserved a sense of balance ; they have not become mere machines, but work hard a part of the day *in order to enjoy themselves* during the other part, when they play with wholehearted

joy like children. Thus you see in the evenings whole families of every class going out to amuse themselves together,—labourers, artisans, shopkeepers, clerks, right up to the wealthiest citizens, the men not herded together in clubs or inns, but sitting with their families at the little tables which are put out under the trees in most of the main streets in the evening or in that delightful boulevard, the Paseo de Gracia, where, under its four avenues of plane trees, there is a most animated company every summer evening.

But everywhere there is space, trees in most of the streets, little gardens in odd corners ; and even in the narrow streets of the oldest part of the town there are always balconies with flowers growing on them. Even the busy quays have trees on them, and statues, and flower beds, and as Barcelona is the third largest port on the Mediterranean, and considerably over two thousand ships enter its harbour yearly, it has successfully demonstrated the fact that the intensely ugly quay, as most busy ports know them, is no by means necessary to commerce. Even the largest steamers come right up to the quay, and those from Majorca come in close to the Columbus monument, which stands just opposite the south end of the Rambla, that broad delightful main street that runs right through the town, taking different names as it goes through the different quarters. This is one of the most animated thoroughfares in the world, and one can spend hours there just sitting under the trees and watching the people. There are delightful shops, and there is always something going on, always music, for the band plays here twice daily ; generally processions, for there are innumerable feast days and constantly fairs. On



TRIUMPHAL ARCH, BARCELONA

the Feast of St. George, for instance, there is a special fair for flowers in the Audiencia and in the Plaza de la Constitucion there is one for toys. Then there is a lambs' fair in the Paseo de San Juan and a great turkey and goose fair before Christmas in the Rambla de Cataluña. In the Rambla de las Flores, every morning early, under the trees is the daily flower market, and here a great carpet of living colour is spread. Basket after basket of carnations, roses, violets, lilies, all the delicious flowering trees and shrubs which grow down there; behind them on benches are hampers of fruit, oranges and lemons, often cut in branches with leaves and flowers and fruit all together; apples, medlars, grapes; melons of all sorts and sizes; figs with the bloom on them; nuts and herbs and leaves for flavouring; myrtle, bay and laurel. We loved this market, and went day after day, and I bought a honey jar full of the famous Cataluña honey, which I still own and which reminds me of the scent of that delicious market every time I see it upon my breakfast table.

Cataluña honey is famous all over Europe. There are many different kinds, all known and distinct. Blossom honey, the earliest in the year, supposed to taste of almonds and very delicate in flavour; then comes the honey from clover, rather deeper both in colour and flavour; then the flower honey, bright yellow and almost sickly sweet; the lime tree honey comes next. It has a scented taste and is as green as jade; there are two late summer honeys that the Catalans prize especially—that delicate honey made from wild thyme, and all the herbs growing on the mountain side, which reminds me of the celebrated honey of

Hymetus, and then, best and richest of all, the heather honey, in a golden brown comb that seems distilled from hot sunshine and perfume.

On the day before Palm Sunday all the palms, huge bundles and crates of them, come in from Elche and a show of them is held in the Plaza de Cataluña. On Palm Sunday itself they are blessed in the cathedral, and next day you see the fresh palms being fastened on to every window railing and balcony.

Many of the saints days are celebrated by bonfires and processions, and on Corpus Christi day there is a wonderful procession of sacred images, priests, penitents, shrines and acolytes that starts from the cathedral and goes through almost every street. In fact, I have never been in Barcelona (and I have been many times) when there was not something special going on, and you have only to sit in the Rambla to see it come past, for everything in the town gravitates sooner or later to this great thoroughfare. There are many interesting things in the shops; particularly interesting to me were the lovely specimens of Catalan lace, an industry much encouraged, and rightly, for the point lace (*puntas*) and the blonde lace (*blondas*) made here are among the finest hand-made lace now obtainable.

When one is tired of sitting in the Rambla it is wise to wander round the older streets, and most fascinating among them is the Calle de las Caputras, which stands behind the old fountain opposite the door of Santa Maria del Mar. This old street has open air shops, the remains of beautiful old houses and palaces, where one sees the carved escutcheons and arms of old Barcelonian families over many doorways. Another old and once very

aristocratic street is the Calle Moncada, where there are some of the finest gateways and carved windows in Old Barcelona.

There is something specially inspiring about the churches here ; in particular about the cathedral and the Church of Santa Maria del Mar. The cathedral especially is one of those buildings obviously created by a genius, for it produces an impression which cannot be described. The scale is by no means great, but it has an atmosphere of vastness, of great breadth and height, which can only be produced by absolutely perfect proportions.

The inside is extraordinarily dark ; indeed, the best light is quite early in the morning before nine o'clock, but I am not at all sure that the feeling of awe and solemnity is not due to the very darkness itself ! It is necessary, to appreciate it at all, to go and sit in it quietly and let the building gradually reveal itself. Somehow this great cathedral remains in one's memory as a huge building, yet one is struck every time one goes back to it by the fact that it is really much smaller than one had thought, and still, as one sits in it, the same effect is invariably produced ; the walls and roof seem to expand, and one is again conscious of vastness and breadth. In the late afternoon its vaulted roof and ceiling are full of coloured light, for its windows are high up and unusually small, but are all of the most magnificent fifteenth century stained glass. They do not seem to let light in as much as colour, and the lower part of the building remains in the same mystic twilight. It is like watching a gorgeous sunset painting the sky from behind a very high wall, a kind of magic effect of light and colour above you unlike any-

thing else I know. I am always so affected by this strange phenomenon in Barcelona cathedral that I forget all the rest of it, but there are a number of interesting things to see. Many celebrated tombs and monuments, twenty-six chapels, and a very finely carved "silleria," upon which some of the greatest artists and woodcarvers have expended their work. The lower row was carved by Matias Bonafé, in 1457; the upper row and canopy thirty years later by Michael Loquer. Above these stalls are the painted coats-of-arms of members of the Order of the Golden Fleece, placed here by the Spanish King Charles V., when he held that celebrated Chapter of the Order in 1519, which was attended by all the royalties of Europe. King Christian of Denmark, King Sigismund of Poland, the Princes of Orange, the Duke of Alba, all the nobles of Flanders and the grandees of the Spanish court.

Pomp and circumstances have had their home in this great church for many centuries, and I love to watch the light pick out the gold and silver quarterings on the faded escutcheons, or light up a vivid gleam of scarlet or bright blue on the old banners. The cathedral has twenty-six chapels, in one of which, the Capilla del Santo Cristo de Lepanto, hangs that famous "Christ of Lepanto," which Don John of Austria carried in his flagship at the famous battle against the Turks, in 1571. The head of the Christ is turned away in a peculiar position, and the legend has it that the sacred image bent its head to avoid a Turkish bullet.

There are innumerable stories and historical tales about the cathedral and its treasures; one of the most interesting is shown pictured in stone

above the north east entrance, the Puerta de San Ivo. Here in fine relief is carved the story of the knight Vilardell fighting the dragon. This knight vanquished a huge dragon set loose by the Moors to devour the Christians. He was miraculously sustained and helped in his desperate struggle by angels, and managed to conquer the beast, but instead of giving glory to God for his victory he held his sword aloft, boasting of his own strength and prowess, whereupon some drops of the poisonous blood of the dragon ran down the blade and instantly killed him, and, as the description on the relief says, "Dios castigando su vana gloria."

In the market-place at Barcelona I found some of the old chocolate cups; one badly broken, the other almost perfect, though very tarnished. These cups are called jicaras, the Mexican word for a cocoanut-shell, of which the first were made. They are without handles and fit into little filigree cases, which have lids that can be put on the cups when the drinker sets it down to keep the flies off the chocolate. There are some lovely old chocolate cups in the ceramic collection of the Museo Decorativo y Arqueologico; one was made in the form of a lotus flower standing on a leaf, and by some mechanical contrivance the leaves of the lotus unfold when the case is lifted to disclose the cup within. This is another device for preventing the flies getting at the contents.

Chocolate is now drunk from ordinary cups, and is to the Spaniard what coffee is to the Frenchman. It has always been a popular drink in Spain, and became more than ever so when it was decided by the Church that it did not break a fast to drink chocolate. Rome, after much discussion, having

pronounced "liquidum non rumpet jejunium"—liquid does not break fast. It immediately became the universal breakfast throughout Spain, particularly for the priests, for whom it is made just liquid enough to come within the letter of the law; that is, not quite so rich and thick as the chocolate served in cafés in the afternoon, in which your spoon will stand upright! Only a very small cup is taken and, if made by a Spaniard, is always stirred with a stick of cinnamon, which is supposed to enrich the flavour of the chocolate and which certainly takes away the almost sickly sweetness of it; a dry rusk is the best thing to eat with it, and a glass of water should always be drunk immediately afterwards; otherwise you will be consumed with thirst.

The Spaniards are great water drinkers, and are really far more particular about good water than about good wine; that is, they will drink the wine of the place where they are quite contentedly, but they always ask questions about the water, and are very particular about it being cold. Thus one sees at all inns and most of the houses in any village the botijos hung out on poles from windows, or even strung upon the tree branches, anywhere where they can catch a draught of air. The botijo is a porous earthenware vessel, unglazed, with a spout and a handle. When filled with water hung or stood in a draught of air the water becomes chilled by evaporation, so that even in the hottest summer one is always certain of a cool drink. At fairs and in the narrow streets of towns one always hears the cry of the water seller: "Agua—agua—quien quiere agua," chanted continuously, like a Moorish dirge. In the winter a large pot of *hot* water is kept ready in all country

inns to take the chill off the cold, for Spaniards drink water like fishes all the year round, and the first act of a traveller is to take a huge draught of water when he arrives at an inn, even before he enquires about rooms. This has always been so from time immemorial, and a famous story tells how Ferdinand the Catholic, on seeing a peasant drowned in a river, acidly remarked that he had never before seen a Spaniard who had had too much water.

But the love of the Spaniard for water simply extends to using it for drinking purposes; he abhors it for anything else. This is partly the fault of his laws, for Ferdinand and Isabella at the Conquest of Granada not only destroyed the fine Moorish baths there but forbade Christians and Moslems alike from using water for anything but drinking and cooking. This was done at the instigation of the Franciscan confessor, and the Church has always been (in Spain at least), against the use of water for washing. Spanish confessors were instructed to question minutely their penitents on this subject, and not to absolve the overwashed. In this regard there are hundreds of amusing stories. King Philip II. made his daughter Isabella take a most solemn oath not to change her shift until Ostend was taken, and as the siege lasted just on three years and a half, and the oath was rigorously kept, the royal garment became that peculiar shade of tawny yellow called in Spain to this day "Isabella colour."

Another story relates how the sainted nun Eufrasia became head of a convent of one hundred and thirty nuns, not one of whom had ever washed her feet in her life! and where the desire for a bath was accounted a sin. A modern story,

the truth of which I can vouch for, was told me by a young [Englishman. He was travelling in Spain with a friend, another Englishman, considerably older, who had been resident in the country for many years. In an out of the way village in Estremadura they shared a room in the one and only Venta, and in the morning the younger man bestirred himself very early.

"Why are you going out so early?" his companion sleepily asked.

"Oh just to have a dip in the river," the younger man replied. "I suppose there will be no chance of a bath."

"For Heaven's sake don't do that," the elder man said, sitting up in horror. "Don't you know yet you should *never* bathe here; a dry rub down with a rough towel is far better in this country."

The Spanish woman of to-day rarely washes her face; she rubs it with refined spirit, with the white of an egg, with olive oil, but rarely touches it with water. The "friction school" is far preferred to the ordinary bath, and although many of the Spanish hotels to-day have bath-rooms, only foreigners use them, and then with difficulty, as the room is always full of packing cases, and there is generally a clerk doing accounts in it. This, of course, does not apply to the large modern hotels which are now to be found in every big Spanish town, which are built for foreigners, but at which you will see very little that is characteristic of Spanish life and custom. A travelling bath is a far more necessary piece of luggage in Spain than a tin of Keatings, although we were continually told that fleas and "French lady-birds" (?) only bit those who washed!

The old market woman from whom I bought

my chocolate cups was a cheery soul, and became exceedingly friendly when she found out I loved and admired her country. She it was who sent me to the museum to see the old cups there, and she was delighted when I asked permission to rest on her bench and examine her other wares. There was nothing much there, but she assured me she would bring other things for me to see. Somehow we drifted into talking about food, and she told me about all the Spanish dishes and how many of them were cooked. She, being an Andalusian, despised any other cooking, and in particular insisted that no one but an Andalusian could cook a real *Olla*—that great Spanish dish into which it is wisely remarked that “the whole culinary genius of Spain is condensed.” I drew Maria out about the olla, telling her that the only one I had ever tasted had been bad, with tough meat and thin gravy!

“Ah, Señora,” she replied, gravely, “you have evidently eaten it out of its home, and if you cannot go to Andalusia to eat an olla, then eat instead a *Guisado*, or ordinary stew, which these people here can make! No one to-day takes the time to cook properly; no one gathers the necessary herbs for flavouring; *no one dries saffron properly!*” (This was evidently the last word in culinary laziness!)

Maria told me, however, how to make the celebrated *pollo con arroz*, or chicken with rice, so popular all over the country, and by all accounts not nearly so difficult as the olla. You must cut a fat fowl (she was particular about it being fat) into pieces, wipe it carefully with a cloth, but be very careful that no water touches it. A wine-glassful of the finest oil must be put in a casserole,

(an *earthenware* pot—on no account a metal one) and small pieces of bread fried in it, stirring it all the while with a wooden spoon. As soon as the bread is fried it is taken out and replaced by two cloves of garlic, and it is again carefully stirred and as carefully watched, for it must fry, not burn, or it becomes bitter. Then the chicken is put in and kept moving with the wooden spoon for about ten minutes, by which time it is “*dorado*,” or gilded, and just sufficiently browned to be half-cooked. Then are added three finely-chopped onions, four chopped red chillies, tomatoes divided into quarters and *peeled*, and a little parsley. This must be continuously stirred with the wooden spoon; if it once “catches on” the whole contents are spoilt. Meanwhile, two cupfuls of rice, which have been lying in cold saffron water, are strained off and added to the chicken, and enough stock is added to just cover the contents. It must boil up *once* only, and then simmer until the rice is tender, the whole art being in having the rice separate and granulated, no grain broken and mushy, and this is achieved by never ceasing the constant stirring, and never putting a cover on the casserole, which at once condenses the steam and turns the rice into a kind of pudding.

We tried this recipe and found it excellent, though certainly it requires the cook’s undivided attention for three-quarters of an hour! Maria assured me that this dish *must* be cooked over charcoal, otherwise it is never done slowly enough. “It must be *sauced with patience*, my ‘sister,’” she said, “that is the only sauce which goes with it.” Maria had been trained as a cook in her young days, and knew all about salads, which are delicious in Spain, and for which she quoted the

celebrated saying that for a salad four people were necessary: "A spendthrift for oil, a miser for vinegar, a counsellor for salt and a lunatic to mix it!" She was insistent that no knife should be used, but that the lettuce should be torn. "If you use a knife, wherever you cut the leaf will turn black," She was equally insistent on the fact that the oil should be put in first and the whole mixed till every leaf was coated with oil before the salt and vinegar came near it: tarragon and chervil very finely minced was to be sprinkled over it, and it was to be made *at the table*. "If it waits but even twenty minutes the leaves have lost their crisp freshness." The tortilla was another of her favourite dishes, and the best was made with two eggs, two boiled potatoes and chopped bacon. This she admitted even Barcelonians could make, and certainly we had some very good tortillas there.

On the last day of our stay Maria sent up a small boy with a special message. She had found a cook—a real Andalusian—who would make us an olla for dinner if we would go to his little inn. The little inn was in the street behind the old fountain, and we went there at one o'clock for the olla, having sent Maria word to come and eat it with us. The old dame was there waiting, though nothing would induce her to sit down and eat with us. She had tasted the olla, however, and assured us it was "muy bueno." While we ate it she described its method of cooking, and it certainly sounded sufficiently complicated. It is made in two earthenware casseroles, in the first of which the chick peas, or garbanzos, have been well soaked. A piece of beef, a chicken and a large piece of fat bacon are put into this casserole,

brought to a boil and allowed to simmer from four to five hours. In the second casserole all the vegetables are placed—lettuce, cabbage, carrots, celery, endive, olives, onions and garlic, and three red peppers. Then come the Spanish red sausage, and the *pièce de résistance*—half a head of salted pig, which has also been soaked overnight. Both these casseroles must be continually skimmed, so that all the grease is removed from the top, and very carefully watched, as after the first boiling they must only simmer. If they boil a second time the flavour becomes *coarse*. When both casseroles are sufficiently cooked the vegetables are turned out first on a flat deep dish, and the beef is arranged in the centre, the chicken, bacon and pig's head piled up, with the red sausages between. Some of the soup is poured over the dish, and I must confess a more savoury stew I never tasted. It smelt almost as good as it tasted, but of course there was enough of the dish for eight hungry people, and as we were only four to eat it we persuaded Maria to take the rest of it home for her family, which gave her much pleasure.

It would be impossible to dismiss the subject of Spanish foods without some mention of their delicious sweets, which are quite new to me and which I enjoy afresh every time I go into the country. A favourite sweet is quince, which is made into a kind of paste and served in slices at almost every meal. Then there are all kinds of nuts, grated and sprinkled over pastry and jelly or made into a cake with almond paste. The pastry is good, and little cakes made of it have fresh wood strawberries, or any fresh fruit of the moment, put between the pastry in layers, with cream or almond paste, a kind of sweet sandwich.

Strawberries, other than the tiny wood strawberries, are always flavoured with orange juice which Spaniards believe brings out the flavour better than anything else, and there is a delicious paste made of sweetened poppy seed, which I have only eaten in Malaga, which is filled into horns of pastry and served with a glass of wine to afternoon visitors who do not care for the usual chocolate.

Santa Maria del Mar is the second church in Barcelona which interested me enormously. Our Lady of the Sea has naturally a very special claim on the inhabitants of such a port as this, and her church is always full of worshippers. There are always women here praying for their seafaring menfolk—not only sailors, but all those workers on wharves and in shipyards and in fact everyone whose business is connected with great waters, and there are constant masses for those who “go down to the sea in ships.” This church is built on the site of the first chapel to St. Eulalia, and has been rebuilt and restored many times. It was entirely destroyed by fire in the fourteenth century, and so important is it accounted by the citizens of Barcelona that, although the town was awfully poor by reason of the losses occasioned in the great fire, they strained every nerve to rebuild it at once. Women gave their jewels, and those who had any money at all gave a certain portion. Those who had nothing to give gave their time and their service, and this is commemorated in the two little figures over the front entrance, which are shewn carrying wood and stone to help in the building. This church was undoubtedly the great parish church of the town, and it still seems to be the church of the people, lying in the older part of

the town and near the sea, and there are constant crowds of poor people passing in and out of it.

It is said to have been designed by Jaime Fabre, one of those architects whose name is put forward as the possible builder of the cathedral in Palma, and certainly it reminds one quite vividly of the great Mallorcan church, though of course it is not nearly so large ; but its double aisles and its high vaulted ceiling give the same idea of space ; and although it is not nearly so light, it is much lighter than any other church in Barcelona. There are three tiers of small heavily-carved windows containing priceless stained glass, and at sunset when vespers are being sung the walls are all dyed crimson and blue and purple. Just outside where the old fountain stands in the square is the spot where, some twenty-five years ago, many people were killed and many more injured by one of the first anarchist bombs which alarmed Barcelona. It seems to me a strange contrast, this sinister event occurring just before the church which for so many centuries held the reverence and intense devotion of the people, and where the women of Barcelona still go in simple faith to entrust their husbands and sons and lovers to the protection of Our Lady of the Sea.

The Montserrat is one of those places that stand alone ; there is nothing else quite like it ! The Pyrenees have two of these strange mountains, for farther north the Canigou stands up above Vernet, dominating the country round and exercising the most powerful effect on its inhabitants. I was told by a native of Vernet that no one born under the shadow of the Canigou could ever get away from its spell, however successful, famous or rich

he became in other lands. He was never happy or at rest until he came back to live near it. Furthermore, that he could lie quietly in no grave which was not in the land under the spell of the great mountain, which means land from where it can be seen. This gives a vast range, for both from north and south it is a landmark for many many miles. All the way in the train from those delicious towns Port Vendres and Collioure, up almost to Perpignan, right through the Roussillon, the windy province, as it is called, the Canigou stands sentinel, its snowy peaks glittering in the sky like a shining archangel guarding its own land. Catalan poetry is full of it, and it even has a great epic all to itself. Mistral wrote :

"Canigo est la legende, la legende dorée, de votre merveilleux pays de Roussillon, ou les fees hautent encore les cimes blanches des montagnes." This is all sheer superstition, of course, but the Canigou is a pagan god to its sons and daughters and one can scarcely wonder at all this when one sees it and lives under its shadow for a short while.

Very different is Montserrat, the Sacred Mountain, the Monsalvat of the Middle Ages, where tradition located the Castle of the Holy Grail, and which has been a holy place and one of the great pilgrimages of the world for countless generations.

I asked one of the monks if it was even hazarded how many pilgrims had been here, and he smiled.

"Only God knows, my daughter," he said ; "but millions and millions surely, for over sixty thousand come every year."

The monastery itself is one of the most celebrated convents in Spain. It was founded as a nunnery in 880, on the discovery of the miraculous image of the Virgin, but there is every proof that

there was a Benedictine settlement here before that. These Benedictines owned as greatest treasure this sacred image, a wooden figure of Our Lady, quite black with age, which is said to have been made by St. Luke and brought to Spain by S. Peter. On the invasion of the Moors the monks hid it for safety in a cave, and there it remained till found by some shepherds in 880. Special efforts were made to move the image to Mauresa, but the sacred figure refused to stir beyond the spot now marked by a cross, where the convent was erected to house it. In the seventeenth century the "Sanctuary of the Cave" was built over the very grotto in which the image was found, and an easy pilgrim path leads to it from the monastery to-day.

The monastery has had many vicissitudes. It was restored to the Benedictine Order in 976, and in 1410 Pope Benedict raised it to the dignity of an independent abbacy, but in 1874 it again came under the domination of the bishops of Barcelona. It possessed immense wealth, but much of it was lost during the Carlist rising, amongst which was the priceless library containing what was said to be some of the finest missals in the world. Nowadays there are about twenty monks, who have a school of ecclesiastical music and who themselves generally chant the Salve at La Oracion.

The very approach to Montserrat is in the nature of a pilgrimage, and there are many ways of going from Barcelona; motor omnibus, car or the two railways will all take you, and it is a most lovely journey. The base of this great mountain covers some fifteen miles and rises in grand isolation from the Catalonian plateau; the solitary peak between the Canigou and those final spurs which

form the northern coast of Majorca. On the south-east the mountain is absolutely inaccessible ; the river Llobregat flows round the north-east side and winds right round, running into the sea at Martorell. In its steep valley with the village of Monistrol, through which we approached the ascent, there is a fine view of the north-east side of this huge mass, covered with pine woods and evergreens. This side slopes in broad terraces, which have been used both by the road and the mountain railway as means of ascent, and it is by these natural terraces that one gradually rises up the mountain side, the views all the way up being of wonderful beauty. Towards the end of the trip the trees and shrubs cease, and quite suddenly one comes in sight of the monastery, the tall bare buildings of yellow stone that has so identified itself with the colour of the mountain that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish it even a short distance away. At night particularly the huge naked peaks above the "Gistaur," or "stone watchmen" of the Moors, seem part of the building ; they transform its shape, adding towers, turrets and battlements, till the whole Castle of the Holy Grail seems to be rising miraculously before you. No one can be surprised that the old monks, wandering in ancient times to the top of this strange mountain, should have really believed that this miraculous castle, built by no human hands, but sought for by pilgrims for many ages, was here revealed to them.

Montserrat is indeed a very mystical and magical place ; if you stay overnight—and one is even permitted to stay two nights—it becomes more and more wonderful. In the early morning and the late evening it seemed to me scarcely like an

earthly place at all, but some dream city with castles and palaces all glittering and shining, descended from the heavens.

This is all enhanced by the conditions under which one spends that night, and it is far better to stay at the Despacho de Aposentos, where a clean, bare, whitewashed room like a cell is placed at one's disposal, than to stay at either of the hotels about two miles down the road; in the Despacho one attends to oneself, and here one can attune one's mood to the feelings of awe and devotion which vibrate in the atmosphere.

The constant adoration of Our Lady, the pilgrims, the incessant chanting of the monks, all tend to accentuate the feeling of being singularly alone, withdrawn from the world into the silence and peace of this great mountain. We went in the morning early to the Visitation of the Virgin, where the strange, dark image is unveiled for the pilgrims to kiss and where, after the Visitation, the great wardrobe of the Virgin and her wonderful jewellery may be shown. There are more than one hundred different robes, and ornaments to correspond, and I am told that the robing of the image is a wonderful sight; so powerful is the magnetism of this ancient figure that the priests who robe her never dare look at her face, and the placing of the crowns on the heads of the Mother and Child is done by them with great awe and reverence.

But far more touching to me than the grandeur and richness of the robes and jewels are all the pathetic little votive offerings hung round Our Lady's chapel! Little coats and children's frocks from those who had been cured of sickness; limbs modelled in wax or carved in wood, ropes

which saved the life of a climber, and, most touching of all, long plaits of hair, cut off and offered by women whose husbands had been preserved in great danger, and who had nothing else to give.

All the while the image is being revered the monks sing the special chant to the Virgin, said to have been first composed by Ignatius Loyola when, after the battle of Pampeluna, he laid his sword on the altar before this very image, gave up his military career and dedicated himself to the service of the Virgin and her Son ; this sword is still preserved in the church of the Jesuits in Barcelona. The Virgin's chant, " A Nostra Dona de Montserrat," has very fine music, and the words chanted in the deep sonorous voices of the monks seem to have something about them in the nature of a spell. One hears it so often up there that it attaches itself to the place, and I could never get it out of my head.

" O Deu, donador de tota gracia, qui la montanya electa de la gloriosa Mare, de nostre Unigenit honoreu amb culte insigne: concediu-nos que, fortament aidats de la proteccio de la Immaculada sempre Verge Maria, a la muntanya, que es el Crist, segurs poguem arribar. Que, essent Deu, viviu i regnen per tots els segles de segles. Amen."

Even more wonderful was the singing of the salves at the Ave Maria, to which we went each evening. I felt that I could have floated away from Montserrat in a dream to the sound of that deep regular chanting, and, indeed, coming out of the chapel, the place looks like a vision, more ethereal and unearthly than ever. One seems hung on the edge of the world ; nebulous clouds lying below cut off the ordinary earth of everyday

life and one is floating in space. The last rays of the sun catch the broad Catalan plain, and on the other side far off there is an opal shimmering line, the Mediterranean.

The huge pointed rocks round the monastery, rising far above the building itself, seem rushing upwards, and there is a peculiar feeling of movement. I thought the sensation I had in the chapel was actually about to become true and that the whole mountain of the Holy Grail was floating off, loosed from the earth and its limitations—adrift for heaven.

CHAPTER XII

ZARAGOZA

Zaragoza has a unique position in Spain. It lies in the centre of a fertile oasis in the middle of the desert of Aragon, and it has four rivers flowing by it. As Spain is a country of few rivers this seems an unfair advantage for Zaragoza, but one must confess she has made the most of it. She recognised, doubtless, that it was to her rivers that she owed her fame. When the Emperor Augustus realised her remarkable position in the centre of the Ebro basin, with the Huerva and Jalon flowing southwards and the Gallego flowing north, he at once made it a great centre, calling it the Colonia Caesaraugusta, which was rapidly corrupted to Zaragoza.

It was at Zaragoza that Don Moyano explained to me the true significance of Spanish rivers and the huge empty river beds.

Spain has but six great rivers, the Ebro, the Duero, the Tagus, the Miño, the Guadiana and the Guadalquivir, which all, with the exception of the Ebro, empty themselves into the Atlantic. The country, however, has any amount of brackish streams, salt mines and saline deposits after the evaporation of the sea water. The whole central portion is so strongly impregnated with saltpetre that the tiny province of La Mancha alone could furnish sufficient materials to blow up the whole world! All the central plateau is arid and be-

coming more so every day ; no trees grow there, so there is nothing to check the rapid evaporation, and the slopes of the hills are constantly crumbling away after heavy rains. The soil has long gone from them, and the supply of water from the crumbly, rocky ground is incapable of filtration, and cannot hold the water. Furthermore, the great rivers which are fed by tributary streams and thus have some water in summer are drained off for purposes of the artificial irrigation of the arid plains—"sangrado" or, "bled," as the Spaniards say, to make cultivation of the ground possible, and this is the reason why at Valencia and Madrid, for instance, the large beds of the Turia and Manzanares are like vast waste dunes. In winter, after rains, however, great rushing torrents tear down these beds, carrying everything before them, coming down like huge, grey billows of water and spreading devastation in their track. Few visitors see them in this condition, and huge jokes are quite common about the empty river beds. Thus in Valencia a stranger once wrote to the town council, advising them to sell one of their magnificent bridges and buy a little water with the proceeds ! And the well-worn Madrid joke tells the traveller, if he wishes to see the Manzanares, to run down, or take a tram if he can, to the river bed as soon as ever it begins to rain ; anyhow to hurry, or the river will be gone before he can get there ! There is even a historical joke about the Manzanares, for when the Spaniards lost the battle of Rio Seco and Bonaparte took Madrid, the French soldiers, crossing the dry river bed in pursuit of the enemy, called out : " Why, Spanish rivers run away too ! " There is another perfectly charming story of a Spanish

river—the Alagon, at Coria—which is crossed by an uncertain and dangerous ferry, while its splendid five-arched bridge stands intact about four fields away! Here the river changed its bed after a great flood. “Salido de madre,” as the Spaniards say—“Gone out from its mother”—who evidently forgot all about her disobedient child! The inhabitants of Coria do absolutely nothing to get the river back into its old channel, but go on, generation after generation, with the inconvenient ford, with the fine bridge standing high and dry half a mile away! There appears to be a proverb that if one waits a thousand years all unfaithful rivers return to their beds. “Despues de años mil, vuelve el rio a su cubil,” so in true Spanish fashion they are waiting. After all, what is a thousand years to Spain!

A great river joke in Seville, when steamers instead of sailing boats were first introduced on the Guadalquivir, was that the advertisement specially printed the fact that these steamboats were quite safe, as a mass was always said before starting, so that the passengers might be quite sure the steam-propelled vessel was not dangerous! The Ebro at Zaragoza is one of the big streams, and flows under its fine bridge with quite a volume of water. The town stands on the right bank, and you are not five minutes in it before you realise that it has made history—big history. Every old house and palace, battlement and wall, conveys that to you. Here is a city of grandeur and magnificence, built by its people with love and pride, held as the undisputed capital of its province, the residence of royalty and the centre of the great chivalrous court of Aragon. Although Romans and Moors occupied it (indeed, the Crescent

ruled over the town for four centuries), there seems less Moorish influence here than in any other of the older towns. There is some fine old Moorish work to be seen in the Castillo de la Aljaferia, but the aristocratic old houses of the town, the famous "solares," were built for and inhabited by Spanish grandees and patricians, and there is no mistaking them. Some of them, it is true, disappeared during the constant sieges from which the town has suffered, but many are still left. One of the finest of these old palaces is the one known popularly as the "Casa de los Gigantes," from its great figures at the door. This was the former place of one of Zaragoza's famous families, the Counts of Luna to which belonged the Anti-Pope Benedict XIII. and also, as a contrast, the hero of the "Trovatore" of Verdi's opera, a versatile family indeed! There is some fine carving and reliefs here; one over the main entrance showing Pope Benedict entering Zaragoza and another showing the arms of the Luna family, while their device, a moon, is introduced into all the decorations of the house. Another celebrated house was the Casa del Conde de Argillo, now a college, and the Casa de la Infanta has some elaborate and ancient carvings, a very beautiful court and a fine staircase. Walking about the old streets in the evening, in the golden light of the setting sun, it is easy to transpose oneself back to olden days. One expects a knight in armour to ride out of some ancient courtyard or to hear the clanking of armour from the guard rooms.

Zaragoza, with the sun shining on its old roofs and on the brilliant green and white domes and cupolas of its second cathedral, the Church of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, with its wide view over the plains of Aragon to the white chain of the

Pyrenees in the distance, looks so peaceful and dignified that one can scarcely credit its warlike history. It seems never to have been out of trouble; always fighting, constantly besieged! From 1118, when it became the capital of the kingdom of Aragon, it had a perfect flair for fighting, and never seemed happy unless engaged in it. There was always great jealousy between Aragon and Castile. And although the Catholic kings literally plastered their mutual arms and devices over its walls the removal of the court to Castile, on the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, was never forgiven. From then on it might be said Zaragoza was always "agin the Government." The citizens refused to recognise Alfonso III. as king until he had been crowned in their city; they had fearful rows with both Pedro IV. and Ferdinand I., and they aroused the heads of the Inquisition to fury by their murder of the great Inquisitor Pedro de Arbues, when he was hearing mass in the old cathedral. This gentleman, like all inquisitors, was wearing chain armour under his monk's habit, so although six men attacked him he did not die before having insisted on his party inflicting the heaviest penalty on the city, and from then on Zaragoza was under the severest ban of the Inquisition, and terrible scenes were enacted in her streets.

During the Spanish War of Liberation Zaragoza attained the height of her fame. The unfortified town defended itself for more than eight months against the army of France, and at last succumbed to famine and pestilence rather than to their enemy. Then it was that the famous saying was coined by the brave Zaragozians—"Guerra al cuchillo"—war to the knife, which has passed as a

proverb into many languages. Here it was, too, that the celebrated Maid of Zaragoza became famous throughout Europe. The city had held out under the siege for months, the French at last getting through the lines of defence near the convent of Santa Eugracia, but the brave citizens still fought on, retiring house by house and fighting like madmen, the French losses being terrible.

Then it was that from the Puerta del Portillo, Augustina de Zaragoza fought valiantly by the side of her lover. When he was killed she snatched the lintstock from his dead hand and worked the gun herself ! A statue to her and the women who defended the city, fighting together with their menfolk at this great siege, stands now in the Plaza del Portillo. Augustina Zaragoza's fame flew all over Europe. Byron immortalised her in *Childe Harold* :

“ Her lover sinks—she sheds no ill-timed tear.
Her chief is slain—she fills his fatal post.
Her fellows flee—she checks their base career.
The foe retires—she heads the sallying host.
Who can appease like her a lover's ghost ?

Who can avenge so well a leader's fall ?
What maid retrieve when man's flush'd hope is
lost
Who hangs so fiercely on the flying Gaul
Foil'd by a woman's hand before a batter'd
wall ?”

Many years ago a great Irish writer advanced the theory of an earth spirit, a benign mystical force which held the events that happened in various places as pictures or visions which could be repro-

duced in the same places again for those mortals who were sufficiently in tune with the earth force to be able to see them. He furthermore believed that the great attraction of old countries, old cities, old palaces, lay in the power stored there by people who had loved and lived, fought and died in them.

"The country that charms and attracts," he would say, "is the country that has been greatly loved, the country that has been soaked in the blood of its sons, who have willingly given their lives to defend it. The houses, the gardens that have been fashioned by loving and devoted hands, still hold their magic sweetness and fascination by virtue of the love poured into their creation when the hand and brain of those who created them are long since dust and ashes."

Certainly Spain would seem to bear out this theory, and nowhere more vitally than in Zaragoza. Its streets seem to me to be thronged with unseen citizens, its walls and ramparts vibrate with the defending clank of arms. Its ancient palaces and courtyards have echoes of old lutes and guitars, of troubadours, knights and beautiful Spanish women; its churches are full of the atmosphere of fervent prayer and devotion.

This is peculiarly marked in the second cathedral of Zaragoza, the Church of the Virgin del Pilar, at which it is the fashion of modern writers to smile. The architecture may be—indeed, is—bizarre and ornate, though the vivid tiling of the domes certainly brightens the town as they rise high over the old roofs and above the trees in the square. Here is housed that wooden figure of Our Lady, blackened by the incense of years, standing on the silver pillar on which she appeared

to St. James when he journeyed through Spain as a missionary. The Pilar is enclosed, but from an aperture in the altar wall behind it can be seen and touched. This has always been a favourite shrine for pilgrims to visit, and on the yearly anniversary of Our Lady's appearance to S. James the town is thronged by the devout from all over the country. There was originally a tiny chapel here, the cathedral only having been built in 1753.

The first cathedral of Zaragoza, La Seo, stands on the foundation of the old Moorish mosque, and is a huge, finely vaulted church with many chapels, much carving and a very remarkable marble flooring. When we were there this was being restored, or chemically cleaned ; anyhow, it was almost impossible to see it properly. Characteristically, a herd of goats filled the cathedral square and wandered up and down the steps, cropping tufts of grass and getting in everyone's way. Enquiring for the goatherd, we found him attending a christening in one of the chapels, the while his goats waited philosophically for his return to lead them out to the hills !

Fiery and patriotic as are the inhabitants of Zaragoza, they share to the full the procrastinating and easy-going habits of their compatriots. The plan of the Cathedral of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, for instance, included four large towers, of which one was finished in 1891 and the second in 1906, some two hundred years after the cathedral itself was built ; but when teased about this mañana temperament the Spaniard remains perfectly good-tempered, and puts it down to the *bad Government*. Zaragoza, always at feud with the Government, thoroughly enjoys the time-honoured story, which indeed all Spaniards love.

When Ferdinand III. died after having captured Seville, he, for his many virtues, escaped purgatory and was especially presented to the Holy Virgin. In view of his many saintly virtues, Our Lady permitted him to ask any request for his beloved country, and assured him that whatever he asked for Spain should be granted.

The king asked for corn—wine and oil, and all were given ; then for brave men, beautiful women, sunny skies ; and again all were bestowed. Emboldened by success, he appealed for saintly relics, wine, garlic and bulls ; and once more his requests were granted. Last of all, the monarch begged for a *good Government*. But here the Virgin protested. “Nay, nay,” she said, “that can never be granted, for if it were, not an angel would remain a day longer in heaven !”

CHAPTER XIII

MULES AND MULETEERS

The main road from Zaragoza to Madrid is supposed to be one of the good roads in Spain, and in spite of pessimistic protests from the chauffeur we decided to risk it. The swallows were flying low all round the Plaza when we left the town, but it was a perfectly gorgeous morning, and the whole chain of the distant Pyrenees stood white against a brilliant blue sky. For about five miles out of the town the scenery is that of a delicious garden, and we passed from groves of olives, almonds, figs, to prosperous vineyards and ventas, where everyone came out to watch the car go past, and we saw many peasants coming into Zaragoza market. Their costume is picturesque and unusual, the men wearing short black velvet trousers, slashed at the sides to show the white linen breeches underneath, and a short velvet coat with wide sleeves, under which a good deal of white shirt is visible. The great point is the coloured sash wound round and round the waist in folds, and in these folds the peasant keeps all sorts of oddments, using them as a kind of pocket. Why the things don't all fall out I cannot think ; and how they know in just what fold is money, string, tobacco, papers, is extraordinary ; but they never seem to make a mistake, and can put their fingers into the very place where each article they need happens to be. They wear black

stockings and hempen sandals, and the usual coloured silk handkerchief tightly bound round the head. It was a market day when we left Zaragoza, and we met literally dozens of peasants sitting in their haphazard way right on the hindquarters of their mules, their legs hanging loosely down and big baskets of fruit and vegetables in front of them. These mules are most interesting to watch being got ready to start, for they are very heavily laden, the cargo being divided into three portions, one hung on either side of the animal and the third put in the centre. The mule will not move if the load is not absolutely even, so, to avoid the trouble of unloading it all the muleteer simply tosses a few stones into the lighter side to make the balance true, the additional weight being of less consideration than an even balance. In going up and down the narrow mule tracks on the mountain side the mule always walks on the extreme outside edge of the path, and were their loads uneven it would be impossible for them to keep their balance on these precipitous hillsides. If there is not room on the mule's hindquarters the muleteer walks by his side, but it is astonishing what a heavy load the mule will carry ; loaded, it would seem, beyond endurance, one is astounded to see the muleteer hoist himself on the top of it all, his feet dangling somewhere about the mules' neck. In pack mules there is always a leader, a particularly large animal usually being chosen. He carries an enormous bell with a wooden clapper round his neck, which one hears a great distance away. There are several reasons for this, for not only do the rest of the pack follow their clapper mule, but the noise is supposed to frighten away evil spirits ; a more sensible reason

being that the muleteer of another caravan of pack mules can hear it coming in the opposite direction, and run up to the leader of his team, leading him to the inside of the path. Which caravan of pack mules thus gives way to the other. I have never been able to find out, but there is some special rule about it which all muleteers adhere to. The mules themselves would never give place, I am told, and as each pack walks in single file and on the extreme outside edge of the path, their drivers *must* pull one of the caravan leaders inside, or one of them would push the other over the edge. The mules are always gaily decorated with tassels and strappings of coloured worsted, tags of braid, and often a great number of small bells. There is a Spanish proverb which likens an overdressed and noisy woman to the leader of a mule caravan, showy and noisy, "Mujer de muchas campanillas." The noise of these mule caravans is tremendous, for in addition to the incessant clatter of the leader's bell there are all the other bells, stones falling, hoofs clattering, and the high-pitched monotonous song of the muleteer, which absolutely never stops, except when he is swearing at his mules. This he does in a kind of scream, vituperating their ancestors and descendants—"Son and grandson of a fool you"; "May all your children be fools and blind"; or some biting insult to his mother! There is one particular oath which is used as a last resource. I was told it was the most terrible oath that a Spanish mule-driver knew, and that he only used it on very serious occasions. It comes direct from the Moors and sounds strange in the ears of a European, but the Spanish mule-driver uses it in all great emergencies, and I must say it never fails

to work. When he has insulted the mule to the limit of his vocabulary and it still refuses to do his bidding he hurls this last terrible oath at it; "May dead donkeys burst on your grandmother's grave!"

In addition to the stick, Spanish muleteers always throw stones at their mules; and when a caravan is about to start a whole volley of stones is discharged at it from everyone standing round. The muleteer himself is worthy of notice, and he certainly lives a hard life, always on the road, in burning sun and icy wind, and apparently always in trouble with his team, though when one becomes accustomed to the noise and the swearing it gradually dawns upon you that this is mostly habit, and that really the mule and the muleteer are quite fond of each other at heart, only their way of showing it is strange and uncouth to the ordinary traveller. The Spanish mule is absolutely surefooted, and if left alone will negotiate the steepest hillside without a false step. It is far better to let the mule choose the path than attempt to guide him. He seems to know exactly what stone or edge will bear his weight and what will not. I was once greatly amused by a boy who had been on a three days' mule trip over the Sierra Nevada.

Asked how he liked mule riding (this having been his first long trip), he replied that the first evening he fell off his *red hot* mule on to a cactus plant with great relief, and that when he could bear to look on a Spanish mule again he was going to examine it thoroughly to see whether it had claws or hoofs, for if it had not the former he did not know how it had managed to climb up the hillsides they had mounted!

I never saw so many mules and mule caravans as on this trip from Zaragoza to Madrid, but we left just before the great Feria week, and all roads were then leading to the Aragon capital. No greater contrast can be possible than that between the country of Catalonia, through which we had passed on the way to Zaragoza, and this great central plateau of Spain, which we were now entering.

Within ten miles of Zaragoza one appears to have entered a desert. Gone are all the gardens and vineyards, the fruit trees and olive groves; the country was arid and dry, the hillsides rugged and bare, and the dust perfectly terrible. Every now and then we came to a valley where a small stream made vegetation possible, but the villages looked parched and poverty stricken and the people seemed to become more silent and taciturn as we went on. All this district is more steeped in melancholy and superstition than any other part of Spain. The mountains are haunted and the peasants all wear amulets, generally a silver image of the Virgin del Pilar (her picture hangs in every house), and believe firmly in the evil eye. Our car was certainly looked at askance; for the first and only time in Spain we were refused water; there was no wine to be bought, and going through one village stones were certainly thrown after us. It was then that the bright member of the party suggested tying the little silver image of the Virgin del Pilar, which we had bought in Zaragoza, on to the car sign, and sure enough, after this was done, in the very next village both water and wine were forthcoming, which, as we were almost choked with dust, was more than acceptable. But except for the awful dust the road was not bad, and we

pushed right on as far as Sigüenza, more than halfway to Madrid. Here in the unpretentious little station hotel I slept for the first time in one of those strange dark, inside rooms that Spaniards seem to take for granted, but that seem inexplicable to everyone else. They have no windows, but open on to a corridor with plenty of windows, and I have never been able to understand why the rooms are not built on the window side, and not even Don Moyano could ever give any satisfactory explanation of it, except that Spaniards do not like too much sun! In summer they must be hot and airless to a degree, but in March it was not too bad. We had an astonishingly good dinner—trout from the river Henares, quail with an excellent salad, some local cheese and some very nice wine, fortified by which we went out to see the old cathedral by moonlight, much against the advice of the landlord, who assured us that the night air was poisonous!

An interested little crowd in the courtyard of the inn was watching the chauffeur washing the worst of the dust off the car, and pointing with astonishment to the little silver figure tied on to the sign with wire. I feel certain that little figure carried us over many difficulties during that trip at least!

Sigüenza lies high—3,220 feet—and has a really fine cathedral with massive towers and battlements, which seemed as if they more properly belonged to a fortified city than to a House of God. It also has the ruins of a fine Moorish castle, which looked magnificent at night. We were quite astonished to find them just ordinary ruins by the cold light of the next morning!

Nobody had ever heard of anything but choco-

late for breakfast in Sigüenza—so chocolate it was next morning, and a more unsatisfactory breakfast to travel on cannot be imagined! Rich—sweet—sticky, the last thing one wants before a long motor ride, but at least it was sustaining, which was all to the good, as the weather had changed in the night, and an icy wind was tearing down from the mountains. “Cover your mouth, my sister, in the name of God, for the Terral blows to-day,” was the universal greeting from each of the party to the others as they appeared, that phrase having become a cliché among us since the beggars in Malaga used it to me.

Sure enough, as we drove out of the yard every soul we met had his mantle well wrapt round his face, the Terral was indeed blowing!

CHAPTER XIV

MADRID

Madrid never seems to me to have anything characteristically Spanish about it ; were it not for the language and the " mañana " atmosphere it might be a town in almost any southern country. There is only one place from which one can be quite sure it is Spain, and that is when looking at the panorama of country from the Parque de Madrid, which spreads out on all sides, a vast arid plain, vibrating with heat and sun, the meeting of plateau and sky only broken in the west by the range of the Guadarrama Sierra.

It stands almost in the middle of the great central plateau at a height of over two thousand feet above sea level, and all the winds of heaven blow round it. It has an abominable climate ; in winter the thermometer often falls to freezing point, and in summer the heat is almost unbearable, but it is the sudden and extreme changes of the temperature that are so very dangerous. They frequently vary eighteen degrees in one day and in addition it is always windy, a wind full of gritty dust. The Madrileño rivals the English in his jokes about his own climate and he assures you it is necessary to wait till the fortieth day of May before it is safe to leave off your cloak ! Another popular saying is that the air of Madrid is so keen and subtle that it will kill a man but not blow out a candle !

Philip II. selected Madrid as his capital out of sheer necessity. He literally dared not choose among the great towns of Seville, Cordoba, Burgos, Toledo or Zaragoza for fear of offending the others, and it is wonderful what has been made out of a city which a Spanish author, as late as the eighteenth century, called the dirtiest capital in Europe.

It hasn't even a decent river, for the Manzanares is little more than a stream, which almost vanishes entirely in the summer, but which nevertheless has six magnificent bridges, of which the Puente de Toledo and the many-arched Puente de Segovia are really very fine. The Bourbon royal house did much for the capital, building the magnificent royal palace, the Prado, the Custom House and several other of the finest buildings. Old Madrid is rapidly disappearing, the city being gradually rebuilt in broad boulevards, but the great square, the Puerta del Sol, is still the real centre of life, from which no less than ten different streets radiate. When I knew Madrid very little and Spanish even less I was always able to find my way home if I could arrive at the Puerta del Sol. Here people still come "to take the sun" and the square is always full—people talking and laughing; shrieking, clanging tramcars; stands of taxis and automobiles. Just a few houses down one of the streets leading from here—the Calle Mayor, I think,—stands the smiling little dwarf selling newspapers, who is an exact facsimile of Velasquez's dwarf in the Prado. Everybody, and certainly every visitor to Madrid, knows this little dwarf. He must have stood here selling his papers for twenty years. From the Puerta del Sol the broad Calle de Alcalá leads direct to the

Prado, and whatever one thinks of Madrid one must love the Prado. It has several rows of trees, delightful flower beds, fountains and comfortable chairs to sit upon and watch the people pass. This used to be the fashionable promenade where all the best horses and prettiest women could be seen, but lately the new boulevards to the north are considered smarter, though in the afternoon one still sees many fine horses here. On one side of the Prado are many of the newest buildings, the Bolse de Comercio, the Museo de Artilleria and others, while on the other side is the great museum which contains that wonderful collection of old paintings, perhaps the most important in Europe. I was shewn Madrid at first by a well-known connoisseur of pictures, who counted each year lost in which he did not spend a month or two at least in Madrid. When I, slightly disillusioned, asked him why he was so very fond of it, he said, "Oh, the Prado pictures are worth everything else in the world to me. I spend every morning I am in Madrid here, have done so for thirty years and enjoy it more each year I come." The Museo del Prado is truly a wonderful place, containing over 2,400 pictures, amongst which are some of the finest works of Velazquez, Rubens, Murillo, Ribera, Goya, El Greco, and very many other famous painters. One ought to spend all the time one possibly can while in Madrid in this gallery, which certainly fascinates one more and more each time one visits it. The authorities have a maddening way, however, of moving the pictures about, and always appear astonished if one asks where a certain picture has been taken to—"True, last year it was in Gallery No. 5—now——" Eventually they will find out where it now is, but why

it has been moved or why the works of one master should not be kept together no one ever appears to know. The most enjoyable way of spending one's time in Madrid is to devote the morning always to the pictures in the Prado, resting after lunch and pottering about the park and old streets in the late afternoon. Everything is particularly late in Madrid ; one dines at nine or half-past nine at night, and I well remember one Easter Monday waiting sleepily in the opera house at a quarter to two in the morning for the last Act of Carmen to commence. It was a very fine performance ; I have never seen Carmen more splendidly given, but I was very tired when we got back somewhere about three o'clock a.m.

The great heat in summer necessitates the siesta, and offices in Madrid close from one to four o'clock, remaining open again until about eight in the evening, which of course makes everything very late. Indeed, there are people in the streets all night it would appear, the trams running until about two in the morning. It is astonishing to see what late hours children keep in Spain ; many of them dine with their parents at nine o'clock, eating a rich meal at that hour and sitting on afterwards until half-past ten or eleven ; as against this nothing begins early in the morning, offices and galleries never opening before ten o'clock.

Right at the other side of the town from the Prado lies the royal palace, which stands up a fine pile, from the outside courtyard of which there is a magnificent view over miles of country. The interior of the palace is on a grand scale, but can rarely be seen, though by special permission one can sometimes obtain a ticket for the wonderful collection of

tapestries, which is particularly interesting, or for the special Easter mass, which the whole court attends in full gala costume. This is held in the royal chapel, right inside the palace, up that great staircase where Napoleon, visiting his brother Joseph, told him that he was better housed than the Emperor himself, and made the envious remark "Je la tiens enfin, cette Espagne si désirée." The inside court is one of the largest in Spain, and there is a huge outside court or parade square with a large balcony on which the royal family appear on great occasions, and where there are always crowds of people listening to the band and watching the changing of the guard. The Easter Mass is a interesting function, although the chapel royal is quite ornate and ordinary, full of gilding and red plush, but the Eslava music is amongst his finest and the royal procession is quite brilliant. It is headed by the King and Queen, he attired as head of the army, she in court dress with long train and wonderful jewels. All the embassies are there, the men either in uniform or knee breeches with medals and orders, the women in full toilet glittering with jewels. I have never seen more magnificent jewels than at this function of the Spanish court. The Queen wore four ropes of enormous pearls, a parure and coronet of rubies and diamonds and her whole bodice ablaze with jewelled orders. The Infanta had huge cabochon emeralds and many ropes of pearls and all the ladies-in-waiting were wonderfully bejewelled. One does not realise till one sees her quite near what a very beautiful woman the Queen of Spain is, with her hair like yellow corn, her dazzling complexion and her beautiful figure.

"It was an ardent love match, but it was a very

wise thing too for the King to marry such a beautiful woman," I was told by an old courtier. "For the Spaniard loves beauty and is greatly attracted by it, and although the Queen has made herself enormously beloved by her kindness to the poor and her many good works, it is certain that her beauty has greatly enhanced the admiration and affection which the people feel for her." The King has the true Bourbon face with the underhung chin and the mouth exactly like the picture of his ancestors in the Prado, but he is a fine figure of a man, and when he laughs his face lights up in a most delightful way. And he often laughs; throwing prizes to the bull-fighters from the royal box, watching the polo games at Biarritz, riding out to open the Seville fair, I have seen him again and again, always cheery, always imperturbably good-humoured and charming. He is absolutely wrapped up in his people and is untiring in his efforts to advance Spain in every way. Many Spaniards have told me that if ever Spain were a Republic Alfonso XIII. would be its first president. He has a keen sense of humour, and it is to him that the reply is attributed, when hearing the kings of Europe described as the idle rich,—“Rich perhaps, but, hang it all, not idle!”

Amongst the various collections and shows and museums in Madrid after the Prado I like by far the best the great collection of armour in the royal armoury just outside the palace courtyard. This world-famous collection was begun by Charles V. and every Spanish monarch has added to it. There are all sorts of banners, tattered from many wars; there are tournament suits, field suits, heavy and light fighting armour, some of them by that great artist, the Augsburg armourer, Kolmann.

There is the armour of Barbarossa, Turkish tents and weapons, travelling litters, old Turkish galley lanterns, right down to the lovely little suit of armour made for the Infante Baltasar, which he wore when he was painted on his prancing steed by Velazquez. Little Baltasar must have been a delightful boy; his face in the portrait is very wistful and sweet, and he is pictured in this identical armour, all inlaid with gold, on his little white pony. I could spend days and days in this armoury looking at the wonderful Toledo swords, those living blades of finely tempered steel, the art of making which has been long lost. It is quite thrilling to go through the great collection of swords; everyone has a famous history; everyone belonging to a celebrated man; it is strange to touch them and feel that strong hands have held them, hewn down bitter enemies with them, gripped them in combat during the most vivid moments of stirring life. Here is the sword of the Cid, for instance, the sword of the Duke of Alba, the sword of Don John of Austria, Charles V.'s javelin, consecrated swords presented by the popes to the Spanish sovereigns, the heavy sword of Ferdinand the Catholic, the sword of Hernan Cortés, and that of Pizarro, the great conqueror of Peru. The horse armour and harnesses are peculiarly interesting, and their weight must be terrific. No horses to-day could carry them, and one understands how those enormous fighting ~~horses~~ called destriers were specially bred for the purpose. How a knight in armour fought at all is a wonder to-day; they must be much stronger men than the present generation. There is even a little suit of armour for a hound to protect him when hunting the wild boar, and one wonders if

dogs were more amenable in those days and permitted themselves to be encased in cuirasses of steel and chain.

A great deal of the historical armour one knows already from pictures, because it was the habit of the sovereign who owned it to be painted again and again in it. Thus No. 164 shows the equestrian armour worn by Charles V. at the battle of Mühlberg, in which he was painted by Titian, and the armour labelled as that of Philip II.'s was worn by him when he was painted, both by Titian and Rubens. Some of the ornamentation is very elaborate, the Charles V. armour being heavily embossed and gilt, and patterned with devices of the Golden Fleece and garlands of roses and pomegranates. Then there are wreaths of leaves, branches and fruit; hunting scenes, serpents, nymphs, centaurs and many heraldic devices, all etched, damascened or inlaid with gold, and many of them blackened to show up the gold and silver decoration. It would be very interesting to study in connection with this famous collection the works of the celebrated armourers of the Middle Ages and their different methods and patterns.

Madrid is full of squares and plazas; many of them planted with trees, and all decorated with fountains and statuary. The Spaniards have always been enthusiastic horsemen, and the statues of all the kings are invariably modelled on horseback. Of these probably the finest is the equestrian statue of Philip III., which was ~~mode~~ modelled by Giovanni Bologna and cast in Florence. This stood for a long time in the Casa de Campo, for the Plaza Mayor was used for all sorts of terrible ceremonies and shows. Here in 1680 Charles II. and his consort sat in the royal box

watching an *auto-de-fe* which lasted no less than twelve hours, and it was in this square that Rodrigo Calderon was executed. Bull-fights, canonisations, joustings and tournaments were all held here, the balconies of the houses being used as boxes ; and it was said that fifty thousand could be accommodated. It was, however, on the site of the Plaza San Bernardo that the real place of execution of the Inquisition stood—the famous Quemadero. The largest square in Madrid is the Plaza de Oriente, for which it is said that Joseph Bonaparte destroyed five hundred houses, several convents and a church, and in the centre here stands another famous equestrian statue, that of Philip IV. There are many other statues here, palms, trees and gay flower beds, but this is one of the windiest and bleakest parts of the town, open to those icy currents of air that rush down from the Guadarrama mountains. Far more sheltered is the east side of the city, where, behind the Prado, lies the Parque de Madrid, El Retiro, a large pleasure ground with an artificial lake with many fountains. In particular the Fountain of the Tortoises, which everyone goes to see. Here is the Palacio de Cristal, where there are always several small exhibitions going on. Some of these are very interesting, and one in particular I remember which showed the black and white embroidery made in a special village in the Guadarrama mountains. These are done in a special stitch, and are very effective ; black silk or wool on a white ground, no colours whatever being used.

Another exhibition I saw here showed some of the embroidered shawls which are so very popular in Spain ; the finest of these come from the

Spanish colonies in South America, and are indistinguishable from Chinese embroideries, exactly the same stitches and many of the same patterns being used. A great effort is being made to encourage this embroidery in Spain itself now, but the really valuable shawls all come from Manila, and are handed down from mother to daughter as heirlooms, as are the mantillas.

There was a very comprehensive exhibition of mantillas held in Seville once when I was there, and many had been lent from the collections of the Queen and the ladies of the court. Every sort and kind were shown, the most ordinary being of black or white silk net, heavily patterned with huge flowers and leaves in that particular stitch known as the Spanish lace stitch, which gives a heavy and rich effect almost like brocade; but there are very many different kinds of lace used, and quite simple black net mantillas with a plain border edge are worn by ladies in the early morning when they go to mass. Spain is the land of etiquette par excellence, and the etiquette regarding the mantilla is very strict; a black mantilla is worn always at Church, except for very special fêtes, and it is bad form, I am told, ever to wear an elaborate mantilla in church. It must be fastened in a special way and worn over a comb of a certain height; perfectly plain combs of tortoiseshell without any carving are worn during Holy Week; but although you must wear a plain comb and a simple black mantilla, you may wear the most brilliant diamond earrings and any amount of jewellery! The black mantilla is always worn when paying a visit of condolence, and the white mantilla for calls of congratulation and always at a bull-fight. It is not usual to wear

flowers when wearing the black mantilla, but a rose or carnation is invariably worn with the white one.

Madrid is singular for a Spanish town, in that it has very few good churches. The Church of San Isidro el Real now serves as cathedral, pending the erection of the church designed to be the cathedral, of the city, which stands at the south side of the royal palace on the site of the old Church of the Virgin de la Almudena, to whom the new cathedral will be dedicated.

Nevertheless, it was in the Church of San Isidro el Real that I saw the interesting scene which, I am told, takes place in each cathedral city that holds an ecclesiastical college. Wandering into the church one morning, I found the main door closed, and hung with brocade curtains. A carpet had been laid, the bishop's throne set up, with tables and benches arranged in front of it. At one side was a small wooden pulpit. The benches were full of members of the Ecclesiastical College in their sombre robes and red stoles, and in the pulpit was one of the students, evidently holding some form of preachment. The bishop with his chaplains and the heads of the seminary, who sat at the tables near him, listened attentively, and when the preachment was finished a bell was rung and two students got up from the benches, and, standing before the pulpit, debated the special theological thesis which had been expounded, one student taking the affirmative and the other the negative side. This was not done in Latin, but in Spanish, and I am told this debate takes place at the end of each seminary course, a species of examination which not only shows what the student knows, but his powers of debate in public before

such important listeners as the heads of the Ecclesiastical College and the bishop. Many people came in to hear the debate, and the benches were surrounded by groups of men listening with the greatest interest.

A much more amusing sight, however, is the procession of gaily decorated animals brought to the Church of San Antonio Abad on St. Anthony's Day for special blessing. Not so long ago the animals themselves were blessed, the priests coming outside to the portico to bless each horse, mule or ass as the procession filed past, while smaller animals, such as sheep, lambs, goats, kids, dogs and even birds were all carried inside by their owners, and there received the blessing. But latterly, although the procession still continues, the animals themselves are not blessed, but food for them receives the special benediction, and this food is afterwards eaten by the principal animal of each herd. Here are also brought the woolly lambs designed for the special part in the Easter celebrations, and they always have wreaths of flowers round their necks and many-coloured ribbons. The mules and asses are groomed this day to a pitch of perfection, and frequently have stars of coloured tinsel stuck all over their hindquarters. Quite interesting, too, is the festival of San Isidro del Campo, the patron saint of Madrid, which lasts ten days, and where peasants from all parts of the country come to the Ermita de San Isidro, on the west bank of the river.

In the little church of the saint here there is a sacred spring, and the peasants take away a few drops of the water from this spring in gaily coloured earthenware jugs of rather beautiful shape. Encampments of gypsies come here, and

a sort of fair is held, the noise of which is absolutely deafening, the peasants taking the opportunity of bringing poultry, pigs, goats and kids in to sell.

But all noises in Madrid pale before the din of Christmas Eve, when the famous Cockcrow Mass—Missa del Gallo—is held in most of the churches at midnight. After this mass the whole congregation sings those strange coplas, or stanzas, on the birth of the Saviour—something like our carols—accompanying themselves on toy musical instruments, castanets, whistles, trumpets, bells, anything which clangs or jangles, and all Madrid goes crazy in a perfect orgy of noise, like children.

The two great excursions from Madrid are to Aranjuez and to the Escorial, and to understand the latter one must thoroughly grasp the strange character of Philip II. who built it. This monarch had that mania for rigid exactness and precise detail which has made the Escorial a gloomy prison, and although its wonderful site and the extraordinary way in which it suits the sombre and melancholy mountains in which it stands give the great building an atmosphere of grandeur and iron strength, it impresses on everyone who sees it a sense of defiant desolation and finality. It was built for a tomb and it looks like a tomb, a hopeless and heavy house of the dead, and I cannot imagine anyone entering it without an immense depression immediately falling upon them. Philip II. was grandson of that poor ill-fated queen, Joanna the Mad, whose stormy life presents one of the strangest stories in history. She was the second daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was married when she was fourteen to the Archduke Philip of the Netherlands. One would have thought that for such a favoured princess life held

the greatest gifts, but everything went wrong for Joanna. She conceived a wild, passionate attachment for her husband, which bored him to distraction, and drove him deeper and deeper into a life of pleasure and voluptuous indulgence; the more jealous Joanna got the more she wearied him. When the royal pair journeyed to the Court of Spain to present their son to his grandparents as heir to the throne, both Ferdinand and Isabella were shocked to discover the frivolous and worthless character of their son-in-law and the wretchedness of their daughter. Poor Joanna was mad even then, though no one knew it, but she behaved in an extraordinary fashion. She lavished the most ridiculous attention and adoration on her husband, alternated with frightful scenes of fury and jealousy, and of course Philip retired precipitately to the Netherlands, leaving Joanna and his son with her parents. Three months later Joanna's second son was born, and from then on her madness became unmistakable. Her one passionate desire was to rejoin her husband, and in spite of her parents' protests—in spite of the fact that it was mid-winter—that France was at war and the country could not be crossed—she insisted on journeying to Flanders. All opposition made her more determined, and one evening—she was staying with her mother in the royal castle at Medina—when Isabella had been called away, Joanna left her apartments only partially dressed to start on her journey. The court was horrified, but, according to Spanish etiquette, no one dared touch the royal person of the princess, and in desperation the Bishop of Burgos, who was in charge of the royal household, ordered the castle gates to be closed. This infuriated Joanna, who

sat in the courtyard all night, would permit no one to put additional clothing on her, and a serious illness was the natural result.

Partially recovered, she rejoined her husband a year and a half later, but almost immediately again lost her reason on finding him in love with one of the court ladies, upon whom Joanna literally fell, tearing the curls off her head and scratching her face and shoulders till the blood ran. This naturally did not make for peace between the royal pair, and from then on troubles fell thick and fast on poor Joanna. Her mother died, and she became heir to the crown of Castile, but in consequence of her obvious mental condition the Cortes asked her father to rule the country in her name. This so angered her husband (she having agreed to the proposal) that he proclaimed her insane and placed her in strict confinement.

But it was after her husband's death that the story of her madness became historic and thrilled Europe with horror. Philip died quite suddenly of a fever at Burgos. He was only twenty-eight, and his loss by death took the few remaining wits away from Joanna. She refused absolutely to attend to any details of government, refused even to grant any audience or sign a single paper. All was to be left to her father, and she sat by the coffin of her husband absorbed in grief.

Three months later she suddenly decided to move his body to Granada, and opposition only confirmed her in her madness. She insisted on both the huge coffin of wood and the lead shell being opened that she might again see his face, and on this being done she fell on her knees and passionately kissed the terrible corpse. Then

began surely one of the most terrible and tragic processions ever known. A huge funeral car, drawn by six horses, held the coffins ; and accompanied by a great train of courtiers, priests and monks, the poor mad woman carried the corpse of her dead husband across Spain. They left Burgos in mid-winter, at midnight on the 20th December, and only travelled by night. "A widow who has lost the sun of her soul should never expose herself to the light of day," was Joanna's only reply when reasoned with. Each morning at dawn the body was deposited in some church or monastery, and a full funeral oration said over it ; Joanna constantly insisted that the lids of the coffins should be opened so that she might kiss her dead husband's face and see if the journey was disturbing his rest.

The consternation and misery of the court may be imagined, they were obliged to traverse the wildest country deep in snow, and their sufferings were terrible. Joanna was quite mad ; no one knew what she would order next. Her clothes were in rags ; she was desperately ill, but she was a Castilian Queen, and according to the etiquette of that court no one could use force to her, not even to make her take nourishment. The climax of this awful journey occurred very early one morning when the body had been deposited in the courtyard of a monastery which the crazed Joanna believed to be owned by monks. She discovered it was a nunnery, and in wild haste she had the coffins immediately removed to the open fields, where in deep snow and in the darkness before dawn by flaming torches she had them opened to see if the presence of the nuns had disturbed the dead man. After this, whenever the cortege

halted an armed guard was placed round the coffin to prevent any female approaching the remains, for Joanna's jealousy was as vivid in death as in life. At long last this awful procession reached the monastery at Santa Clara, where the remains were finally deposited and where Joanna had a room arranged, from which she could view the last resting place of her beloved. The Queen never left Santa Clara, and dragged out forty seven years of ceaseless watching before death released her.

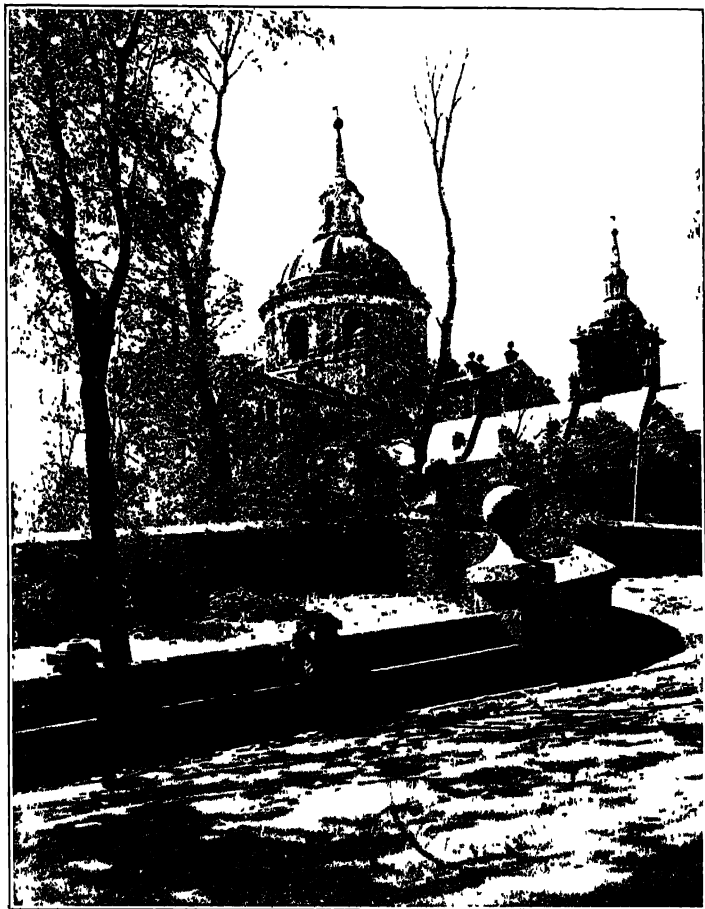
Her son, Charles V., though not quite mad, was certainly peculiarly afflicted, and after his mother's death became very strange indeed. He believed he continually heard her voice imploring him to follow her, and six months after her death he decided to abdicate in favour of his son, Philip II. Charles V. had always spent most of his time in the Netherlands; his heart was there, and his long reign during the years of his mother's madness had been far more devoted to the development of the Low Countries than to Spain. Indeed, he is better known as Emperor of Germany than King of Spain; yet it was Spain he chose for his retirement. He abdicated in Brussels at a most imposing ceremony and sailed for Spain, where at the Convent of Justé in Estremadura he had caused a small house adjoining the monastery to be built for him. A window from his bedroom gave directly into the monastery chapel, so that he could attend mass without even leaving his bed. Here he led a strange life. He had many robes, was served from silver plate, decorated his walls with beautiful pictures, although he hung them with black cloth underneath, and interested himself in a strange collection of clocks, which re-

minded him—when he found how difficult it was to make two of them keep exact time—of the futility of trying to make men agree upon the absorbing subject of religion.

Alternating with this, he devoted much time to religious affairs, keeping all fasts and festivals very strictly, doing penance and scouring himself with such severity that he constantly drew blood. Eventually he conceived the strange idea of rehearsing his own funeral, which actually was done, the Emperor passing through the whole ceremony shrouded in his coffin. The full burial service was read over him, the death knell tolled, and requiems chanted by the monks; Charles passed the rest of the night in prayer before the altar. After this it is not astonishing that the Emperor really did soon die, leaving to his son Philip two special injunctions. One was to cleanse his kingdom from heresy by the most rigorous energy of the Inquisition, shewing mercy or favour to no one. The second being that he should build a special burial church for the Spanish royal house.

There can be but little doubt that Philip II. thoroughly enjoyed his father's commands; he entered with the greatest zest into both, becoming absolutely merciless in his inflictions of torture on heretics, and adding both a monastery and a country residence to the burial church his father had wished him to build.

Such was the builder of that living tomb the Escorial, and when one considers his character and education one is only surprised that it is not even more gloomy and depressing. The site was chosen because it was fairly near the capital and comparatively solitary, on a south spur of the Guadarrama



THE ESCORIAL

mountains, and Philip was extremely lucky in both his architects. Juan Bautista de Toledo, who prepared the plans and laid the foundation stone, suddenly died, and his successor, Juan de Herrera, who was an even greater architect, but whose genius was much hampered by Philip himself, who cut down all the designs of ornamentation and changed his ideas so rapidly that it is remarkable any harmony of design is left at all. In one of his wars Philip had been obliged to destroy a church dedicated to St. Lawrence, and he had vowed to replace it by a monastery. Thus the Escorial is dedicated to San Lorenzo del Escorial, and the ground plan of the building represents the gridiron on which the saint suffered martyrdom, the monastery being the bars and the royal palace the handle. The whole forms an enormous building, containing besides the royal apartments, a church, a college, and the monastery itself. There are sixteen courts, eighty-six staircases and over four thousand windows and doors.

The actual burial vault of the Spanish King is especially constructed right under the high altar, so that mass may be said daily over the royal bones, and the priest is actually standing over the dead monarchs when he elevates the Host. As originally planned the royal vault was simple and dignified, but is now ornate with gilding and marble.

On the left of the altar are the niches for the kings of Spain, and to the right are those for the queens; all the sarcophagi are of black marble with inscriptions and quartering in gold.

There is something extraordinarily melancholy and depressing in the Escorial, in the pictures, in the Patio de los Evangelistas, in the library, and

particularly in the little room in which Philip died. This looks into the chapel, and the king lying on his deathbed could gaze through the windows on to the high altar; he lay there during his long illness, holding his hands in the same crucifix which had consoled his dying father. Some of the old furniture used by the king still remains in this room; a terrible gloom seems to pervade it all, and I should think one of the most terrible days in the year for the royal family of Spain must be that on which they journey to the Escorial to commemorate the anniversary of the death of the heads of their house.

Aranjuez is a very different affair; it was the favourite summer palace of Isabella the Catholic. It stands on the Tagus, the waters of which have been successfully "bled" for the irrigation of the palace grounds and the countryside, which is celebrated for its strawberries, violets and asparagus. Here are some of the most lovely trees in Spain—elms, planes and ilex trees; roses grow riotously, and the shrubberies are alive with nightingales. The parterre garden is a sight in the spring; every possible combination of colour being massed in its beds; the Spaniards are peculiarly fond of the combination of shell pink and pale primrose yellow, and these colourings are arrived at by means of azaleas, rhododendrons and masses of a plant which looks like *calceolaria*, but of a clear soft yellow, unlike any other *calceolarias* I have ever seen. Along the side of the river is that fine avenue of plane trees which was Isabella's great pride; she loved trees, and there is another fine avenue of planes and elm trees alternately, which she is said to have planted, and which is called *Calle de la Reina*. There is a special garden

planted by the canal called the Jardin de la Isla, which is the scene of Schiller's Don Carlos, with broad terraces and many fountains. The canal and the river together provide plenty of water, so this is another of those gardens in Spain which have all the luxuriance of tropical vegetation. Here the Spanish kings built a "Casa del Labrador," which is no more a labourer's cottage than the Trianon was a farm! Its rooms are decorated by a famous artist; carvings, silk hangings, Moorish tiles, adorn its ballrooms and banqueting halls, one salon opens into another and all are most luxuriously fitted up. There is not a great deal to do at Aranjuez, for the Palacio Real and the Casa del Labrador are soon seen, but it is a delightful place in which to spend a summer day and get away from the grilling heat of Madrid.

CHAPTER XV

TOLEDO

Toledo is the greatest contrast to Madrid that can possibly be imagined. There is nothing modern in it, and it would seem that it never could be modernized. It is one of the most ancient cities in Spain, and I do not believe it looks very different to-day from what it must have looked centuries ago. It thrills you at once by its very strangeness, rising up on a bare and rocky hill, round three sides of which the Tagus coils, the fourth side only being connected with the sombre Castilian plain. It towers up above the river in a kind of naked isolation, and the sense of its austere strength is intensified when you get into the town. Its narrow, precipitous streets, its tall, sinister houses, many apparently without windows, the constant glimpse of the rocky foundations, which seem to burst out as though the streets and houses could no longer contain them, are almost alarming, and one realizes how rightly it was described as an "austere, chill and yet burning city of living rock."

Toledo is a very strange place indeed ; it seems as though it might hold dreadful secrets, as though wild and stormy lives had been beaten out there—as indeed they have. It reminds me of its own fierce blades,—keen, sharp, so delicate and elastic that they could be wound round like a watch spring ; so strong and virile that they killed in an instant.

The colouring is unique and as strange as the city itself—restrained greys and blacks with white lights on the river and the grey rocks on the hill across the water splashed with green ; a sky, as I first saw it, with black and grey rushing clouds, ominous and thundery, as they passed over the town.

As we swept up the road from the station and crossed the high swinging bridge which leads to the town we all felt a sense of strange excitement ; one expects something to happen in Toledo—who knows what—but it has that restless air of tragedy and mystery about it. Even the hotel seems different—the renovated part of an old castle—where the windows of one's bedroom are only embrasures in a wall a couple of yards thick, and one has wide views over miles of the Castilian plain.

Nothing untoward happened in Toledo, though one always expected it would, but we stayed on from day to day, held and fascinated by its very strangeness. Romans, Visigoths, Moors and Christians have all held dominion here, and Toledo has taken gifts, remembrances of their occupation, from them, but has allowed none of them to impress themselves upon her to the exclusion of her own individuality. There is not much room for squares or patios, and the Plaza de Zocodover, with its arcades on the two sides and its wide view down the road to the bridge is one of the few open spaces. The streets are so narrow that only foot passengers can use many of them, and some are very steep.

In every part of Spanish history Toledo has played a great part. There are even Visigothic legends about it from the days of King Wamba to

the last Gothic King Rodrigo. One of these relates how the Moors were admitted to the town deliberately as an act of revenge against King Rodrigo, who saw the lovely daughter of Count Julian, one of the great nobles of Toledo, bathing in the Tagus and fell deeply in love with her. His passion being unrequited, he forced an entrance to her chamber, and her father in revenge invited the Moors to enter the city through his castle gates. They possessed the town, treated its inhabitants kindly, taught them the arts of silk weaving and the manufacture of arms and founded a great Moorish school of learning. That celebrated Spanish warrior, the Cid, was the head of the Spanish army who took the city from the Moors in 1085, and he entered it in triumph with his sovereign, Alfonso VI. of Castile. It was at this entry that his horse knelt before the mosque where the burning lamp was discovered; a few years later the king transported his capital here from Burgos and made its archbishop primate of all Spain. From then on the city was the great stronghold of the Church. One great ecclesiastic after another ruled it, and not the city alone but all Spain through the city. The Archbishops of Toledo were the most powerful personages in the country, compelling the highest grandees to obey their laws, and by reason of their own armies were enabled to enforce obedience from everyone.

The cathedral is the great glory of Toledo, and took nearly two hundred and seventy years to build; it is indeed one of the great cathedrals in Spain, and is really a very wonderful place. It is an enormous building with many chapels, double aisles, a huge nave and high vaulted roof. It has eight principal entrances, all of them renowned,



TOLEDO

but most famous of all is the Puerta de los Leones, where the finely carved lions, six in number, bear the shields of various archbishops. The rose windows are superb, painted "a fuégo," and really glow like fire; the other windows are filled with renowned stained glass by the best known Flemish artists. The sung masses here are accounted amongst the finest ecclesiastical music in Europe, and there is always a service going on in some of the chapels, it being the boast of the chapter that uninterrupted worship ascends from this cathedral and has done since it was built. At every time of the day this great church holds a different aspect; one never seems to have grasped the whole of it. It is so vast that however crowded it becomes it never seems too full, and even when the huge processional images rest at the bottom of the church during the night of Good Friday there still seems plenty of room. No words will adequately describe this great church; hours and hours must be spent in it before one grasps its real significance. It was my good fortune to witness the Easter celebrations here, and I shall never forget the extraordinary effect they produced upon me. On Maundy Thursday the enormous images were transported from the cathedral to the old Church of San Vicente in procession and rested there over night till Good Friday, when they were reverently carried back in procession to the cathedral. These Easter processions must be seen to be realised. The images carried are those of special saints, several different presentations of the Virgin and then the story of the Crucifixion represented by the scourging—Our Lord falling under the Cross—the nailing to the Cross and finally the body taken down and

lying in a tomb of glass and crystal. These images are mounted on huge wooden platforms and carried on poles which rest on the shoulders of men, who are relieved at various distances by other carriers. The procession is headed by a mounted guard and priests, acolytes, penitents—the latter wearing pointed hoods with holes cut for the eyes—walk between the images. Directly before the first image comes the “singer,” a man who chants those strange coplas, or little verses, relating incidents of the life and death of the Saviour. Immediately the sacred images rest and the procession halts this chanting begins, sung to a Malagueña air, the first copla being sung by the “singer,” and as soon as he ceases some voice in the crowd, or someone watching the procession from a balcony or a roof, takes it up, singing another stanza and slightly varying the harmony. The evening I watched the Toledo procession three people sang at the point of the road where we were, a soldier, a small child and an old woman, each following the other in a fresh stanza as the image rested before them. Immediately the procession moves the singing ceases, to start again when the next image is rested at the same spot. The space between the images in the procession is about fifty yards, and here walk the acolytes, priests, penitents, members of the Ecclesiastical College and various religious orders all carrying candles or banners. Some of the images are terribly realistic, with flowing robes and real hair, and I especially remember the one where two Jews, their gabardines flowing in the wind, were represented nailing the Christ to the Cross. All figures are life-size, and these Jewish figures, standing on ladders at the side of the Cross, with nails and hammers in

their hands, were so alarmingly life-like that they gave one a real shock. This procession with the wailing chant, the candles flickering and the incense burning, threading its way through the dense crowd in the broad main street is sufficiently arresting, but when it comes to the high narrow streets and lanes nearing the old Church of S. Vicente it becomes positively terrifying, and in the dusk of the twilight it is difficult to believe that one is not witnessing some terrible event of the Inquisition.

On Good Friday in the cathedral a solemn service is held at the high altar at mid-day ; the church is very dark then, all the windows being covered with purple curtains and only a few candles on the high altar lighting the obscurity. At twelve o'clock the huge veil before the altar is rent from top to bottom with a loud tearing noise and dead silence is kept for a space. This is one of the most extraordinary moments I have ever taken part in in public worship. The complete silence of a vast multitude is always impressive, but here, with the whole congregation on their knees, the women with their heads covered by heavy veils, the men who cover their faces with their hands as the veil is rent, the whole tense atmosphere—extraordinarily like the solemn two minutes' silence held all over Britain at eleven o'clock on Armistice Day—demonstrates beyond all doubt the complete fervour with which the Spanish people enter into this great ceremony.

I suppose those accustomed year by year to these solemn services become used to them, but seeing them for the first time they are like a terrible dream from which you cannot escape ; a sort of nightmare of which you know the whole

story and what the end will be, but which you are obliged to listen to without being able to go away until it is finished. I do not wonder at the enormous effect produced on peasants and simple country people by these religious processions. When I first saw them I was obliged to remind myself all the time that they were not actual events which were then happening before my eyes.

On the evening of Good Friday the procession re-forms, this time at the Church of San Vicente, and the same route is followed, the images being taken back to the cathedral; they stand at the bottom of the great aisle watching the Easter services and then are carried to one of the cathedral sacristies, where they will remain until the next year.

The Easter services are very gorgeous and far more impressive than any I have seen in Italy. In the cathedral all the windows are unveiled; the sun streams in, the altars all decorated with flowers and the whole of the gold and silver plate is used. Toledo is said to possess the vastest treasures of ecclesiastical jewellery, vestments and ornaments in all Spain, and the finest of these is selected for the great Easter celebration. "We approach the kings of this earth with ceremony, pomp and circumstance," one of the deans in Toledo explained to me, on my remarking at the extraordinary magnificence of his robes, "should we not the more approach the King of kings with even greater care and honour."

The Eslava music for the Easter Mass is very flowery and sweet, almost like an opera, but the great point to me were the bells. At the moment of the Elevation the great bells of the cathedral peal out a special chime; every bell of every

church in the town responds ; every worshipper in the cathedral carries a little silver bell and everyone rings it when the chimes begin—it is a great moment.

Somehow I felt I knew the cathedral better after the Easter services, and I spent much time there looking at the remarkable carving of those wonderful choir stalls said to be the finest in the world. The outside walls of the choir are supported by fifty-two columns of the celebrated Toledo jasper ; indeed, there is a great deal of jasper used in the cathedral.

Cloisters are always delightful, and the cathedral cloisters in Toledo form a kind of square garden with broad walks, trees, a fountain and frescoed walls. One of these frescoes tells the story, believed so firmly in ancient days in Toledo, of the boy stolen by the Jews and crucified. The Jews were well treated on the whole by the Moors, and after the Christian occupation they were tolerated, and as a rule left to their own devices as long as they kept to their ghettos, but every now and then there was raging persecution. It was believed that the heart of a Christian child, torn from its living body, was necessary for some of their most sacred rites, and on the disappearance of any child in Toledo there was always a terrific outburst. Such a one occurred during the big religious riot in 1367, when almost the whole ghetto was burnt to the ground. But it was the Dominican friar, Ferrer, who so inflamed the Toledans against them that they finally demolished their ghettos, destroyed their synagogues and massacred every Jew they could catch. The fresco over the Puerta del Niño Perdido at the entrance of the cathedral cloisters shows two Jews carrying off

a Christian boy. Other delightful cloisters here are those belonging to the Church of San Juan de los Reyes, a monastery church founded by the Catholic kings, intended for their own burial place and therefore dedicated to their particular saint, John the Baptist. But the royal mausoleum was later transferred to Granada, so San Juan de los Reyes lost its *raison d'être*. The interior was much damaged by the French in 1808, and its principal interest now lies in the heavy chains hanging on its outside wall, said to have been struck from the limbs of Christian captives found in Moorish dungeons.

The Juderia or old Jewish quarter where the ghettos originally were lies close to San Juan de los Reyes, and here are the two wonderful little synagogues, Santa Maria la Blanca and El Tránsito, now restored and preserved as national monuments. These two synagogues are conspicuous for their wonderful carvings and tiling, and contain some of the finest Saracen work in the country. Not far from the synagogues lies that fascinating house, the Casa del Greco, which had passed through many vicissitudes before it was the home of the great painter, Domenico Theotocopuli and, since his death, has again had many owners.

That wonderful destiny that rules the affairs of men worked very conspicuously in bringing El Greco, as he was always called, to Toledo, for no town could have so fitted into his vision as this city, and certainly no painter could have so faithfully conveyed the spirit of Toledo as he did.

Domenico Theotocopuli was a mystery man. We know that he died in Toledo in 1614 and was buried in the Church of Santo Domingo el Antiguo

there, but where he came from or what really was his nationality no one knows. It is believed that he studied under Titian in Venice, and on one of his pictures (one of those I think in the Escorial) he has put under the signature "from Crete." Certain it is that he came to Toledo as a young man and immediately recognised the place as his home—the place above all others where he could express himself. Legend has many tales of him, of his intense and passionate devotion to his art, of his great eccentricity, called by many his madness, of his constant quarrels and litigations with those—and they were many—who saw art differently from himself, and ultimately of his work; we know he married in Toledo and had a son, himself an artist, for some of the decoration of the cathedral was done by him after his father's death.

El Greco has been called "the forerunner of impressionism," but it seems to me that this great genius living in Toledo and in love with the city could hardly paint otherwise than he did.

We know that his first work in Spain—where he came hot from the teaching and influence of the Venetian school—is entirely and utterly different from his later work. The fact is El Greco found himself in absolutely his own environment in Toledo. The city answered his moods, his tastes, expressed his views on colour and provided a complete outlet for his own peculiar style and his strange tinting, restrained yet possessing a virility more intense than any vivid colouring could give.

Toledo has that same look of concealed strength which is so much more intriguing than the aspect of mere brute force. It looks a strong place, a city built on a rock, but you have the distinct

impression that there is a great deal more strength behind which you are not seeing. El Greco's faces are like that—ashen, standing out from the black background with an almost startling clearness, the shadows purple and sometimes even green. It is as though the artist had had the power to draw the soul up into the face of the man whom he was painting, and it looked at you from the mortal face portrayed.

All deep thinkers are agreed in the great occult truth that behind the material form seen by the human eye lies something else which is the real soul of the object ; it is only when deep study and immense concentration have so united the seer with the object gazed upon that he can see the real thing itself ; until this is done he only sees the husk, which is nothing at all unless lit by the internal flame.

In all the faces in that extraordinary picture, the Burial of the Conde de Orgaz, which the Archbishop of Toledo commissioned El Greco to paint and which now hangs in the Church of Santo Tomás in Toledo, there is this strange look of the soul looking out of the painted eyes. At first the picture is positively startling, later on it grows on you to such an extent that you can scarcely leave it. The more you look at it the more you feel that there is life in these faces such as has never been put on canvas before. One almost expects the heads to move ; each day I went I found more and more in it, and one can almost see eventually the very emotions which filled those grave Castilian gentlemen as they attended their dying friend.

If El Greco did go mad it was not till long after

this picture was painted, unless in his madness he was directly inspired and given the power to portray living men.

From almost everywhere in Toledo are extraordinary views. Wherever one walks inside the town there are vistas of the sky between high silent houses, to which the absence of windows and the presence of massive iron portals give a fortified look ; I always wondered what was behind those heavily barred doors. Out on the walls, from the roofs and particularly from the broad terraces of the Alcazar, there are miles upon miles of brown and grey plain lying before you, and there is the river winding round the foot of the citadel. Some of the narrow lanes lead right down to the river itself, but usually it lies far beneath you, hidden by rocks, and a flashing white line as the light catches it is the only evidence of its nearness. The Alcazar was a Roman castle, then a Visigoth stronghold ; it was the residence of the Cid when he ruled the town as Alcalde ; the Spanish sovereigns lived in it when it was a royal palace and now it is a cadet school ! It has innumerable legends connected with it, and it was from here that King Rodrigo watched the fair Florinda bathing in the Tagus. Hidden treasure is supposed to lie in the river bed, and there are awful dungeons under the Alcazar, from which prisoners were pushed into the rushing river and never heard of again. On this very rock once lived the great magician of Toledo, Don Illan, whose adventures with the Dean of Santiago is one of the famous Spanish legends.

Don Illan was of Castilian blood, and his fame as a great necromancer spread over the land ; owing to his parentage and birth he was not inter-

ferred with, though many believed him to be in league with the evil one. One day to his astonishment no less a personage than the Dean of Santiago was ushered into his room. This priest, after having been hospitably entertained, confided to the magician his great desire to become an adept and begged him to take him as pupil. At first the magician thought this was a trick and protested that so great a man as the Dean of Santiago, for whom the highest dignities of the Church were waiting, would forget all the time and trouble a poor magician must spend on him to teach him what he desired. The dean protested, begged for the magician's friendship, and implored him to teach him the art, promising him that whatever interests he might acquire should be used to further the fortunes of the magician and his son. After much demur, the magician assented and led the way down to his study, a subterranean chamber hollowed out under the river and containing his globes, his crystals and many works of magic. As they were going down the magician called his Moorish servant and instructed him to get two partridges for supper, but on no account to cook them till he should order it.

They then descended apparently to the very bed of the Tagus, for the dean could hear water gently lapping as one hears it against the side of a ship. He soon forgot his alarm, however, in the extraordinary things Don Illan revealed to him, and they were just about to construct a magic circle when a bell ringing sharply almost frightened him out of his wits. It proved to be an urgent letter, announcing the illness of the dean's uncle, the Archbishop of Santiago, and requesting his immediate return.

"Can you see anything for me?" he asked the magician.

"I see the mitre for you—you will step into your uncle's shoes. May I venture to plead the cause of my son, now a student at the University of Paris, for your vacant deanship?"

"If I succeed my uncle your son shall surely become one of my chaplains," the ecclesiastic replied, and hurried away.

In a few days the magician had a summons to come to Santiago and went at once, hoping to hear good news for his son. The old archbishop had indeed died and his nephew reigned in his stead.

"Do not disturb your son at his studies," the new archbishop remarked; "I must give this post to a member of my sister's family, but later on I will find something better for him, if only you will remain here and further assist me."

Don Illan transported all his goods to Santiago, and worked hard to further the fortunes of his patron; in a few months the important Archbishopric of Seville became vacant and the great man was called there. The magician demurred at following, but again the archbishop insisted.

"Your son shall have a better position in Seville than I could ever have given him in Santiago. Only go on working; I see St. Peter's and the Vatican in all my dreams."

Again the magician consented, but this was harder work; each time he mentioned his son the Archbishop implored him not to disturb the young man's studies.

"I shall require very learned men round me in Rome," he said, "let him study all he can now and

do you work still harder. When we get to Rome——”

At last after many weary years the work was ended and the archbishop was called to Rome for a cardinal's hat. He insisted on Don Illan accompanying him. “You must work harder than ever now; it must be the mitre, not only a hat.”

Don Illan, weary and old, worked every magic he knew and the result was favourable. The cardinal became pope and was so busy and important that he had no moment for old friends. Not once but many times the magician begged for audience, and at last, miserable and ill, sent a veiled message that if the pope could not see him he would leave immediately. Upon his admittance he threw himself on his knees, protesting against the many years he had been kept waiting for the friendly promises to be redeemed. The new Pope was furious, and threatened to denounce him as an ally of the prince of darkness, whereupon Don Illan rose from the ground and looking very boldly at the Pope rang the bell on his table.

“If I am to starve in Rome,” he said, “I had better return to the supper I ordered at Toledo.”

The pope, speechless with indignation, could only gaze at him and watch with stupefaction the door open and the Moorish servant of the magician enter. Looking round he found himself again in Don Illan's study underneath the Tagus.

“Instruct the cook,” said the magician to the servant, “to roast only one of the partridges. I am not minded to waste the other on the Dean of Santiago.”

CHAPTER XVI

SEGOVIA

The very idea of our motor trip from Madrid up through Old Castile filled the chauffeur with apprehension and horror ; he was a man of two principal ideas, the first being cars, the second roads ; he had been told that Spain was deficient in both, and no amount of personal experience to the contrary seemed able to efface the original idea. It was only by pointing out that with every mile he was getting nearer his beloved France, that land of magnificent roads, that we could cheer him at all, and he spent the three days prior to leaving Madrid in a melancholy mood, laying in a stock of spare parts which so filled up the car that all luggage, except the small handbags, had to go on by rail. The one thing he forgot to do, which we had specially insisted on, was to have the little silver image of the Virgin del Pilar properly fastened on to the car, with the result that we lost her between Madrid and Segovia, to my great distress, but to his joy.

Apparently he had felt hurt that our success in getting to Madrid from Zaragoza should have been attributed even in part to her and not to his careful driving, and he was delighted to be able to shew us that he could drive the car without any assistance from "silver images." It was the first thing that cheered him and it certainly spurred him to superhuman efforts.

We left our kind Spanish host in Madrid, setting forth alone on the last adventure with Segovia as our first objective. It lies some sixty miles from Madrid, right over the Sierra de Guadarrama Pass, the old highway from Galicia to Madrid. The road ascends gradually all the way, and one has the most wonderful views over the whole plain of New Castile. The pass itself is five thousand feet high, and at the top there is a rather fine stone lion commemorating the building of this road. He lay in a bed of snow when we were there, and the bitterest wind tore through the mountains. It was in the first village beyond the pass that we missed the little silver image, and though I should dearly have loved to go back to the pass, where I was certain it had fallen, I was entirely over-ruled by the others, who flatly refused to return, remembering the icy wind.

The chaffeur immediately cheered up and ridiculed the idea of bad luck following the loss; he astounded us by making his first quotation from anything he had heard in Spain. "It is God's will that another should have it," he said, most cheerfully, and I gathered that he, too, had been in the Malaga market.

In this little cluster of houses—for it was really no proper village—we stopped to eat lunch in the car, and sitting there saw an episode entirely typical of the grave and dignified Castilian peasant.

In the door of one of the houses sat an elderly man, mending shoes, apparently the shoemaker of the district. The door stood open, projecting into the street, and had wooden panes at the top. These wooden panes were empty, though glass had certainly once been in them, but now they

were filled with bunches of hempen and other shoes hung out on strings. It evidently formed a shop window. A second man, driving a mule with a high wooden cart, used, I should think, for carting wood, came down the road and went into the venta next door to the shoemaker, leaving his mule and cart standing untethered in the road; the mule stood quietly for a few minutes and then backed, and in some strange way the high pole at the back of the cart went through one of these wooden apertures, and the mule, starting suddenly with a jerk, lifted the door right off its loose hinges, and there it hung on the corner pole of the cart. The owner of the mule, hearing the noise, came out of the venta and went to the mule's head. The shoemaker looked up from his work, and seeing what had happened laid down his cigarette, came out, and without a word lifted the door from the cart pole and gravely replacing it on its hinges, resumed his seat and his cigarette, while the muleteer simply led his mule a few yards farther down, left it again untethered, and returned into the venta. Not a word was exchanged between the men; no harm had been done, and so apparently no words were necessary! We sat in the car and wondered at the typical Castilian scene, contrasting it with the frightful row that would have ensued in a French village, had it happened there! The Castilian plain is hot, dry and burnt—a perfect desert—but we were still on the northern slopes of the Sierra, and there were forests of dwarf oaks and other trees, which, however, never grow to a great height. Huge herds of pigs come up here from Estremadura to feed on the acorns, and they gain a fair living from these forests, which no northerner would call anything

but sparsely wooded plantations. However, the swine must find good forage, for the hams are excellent.

The pig is one of the most important animals in Spain, the peasants living mainly on his flesh and on the inevitable chick beans, which are called garbanzos. Wherever there are mountains there are herds of pigs which appear to be able to get a living, as do the goats, from the barest hillside.

They really look quite unlike our pigs, being strange, lean, grey-looking animals with a great amount of hair. The best pigs come from Estremadura, that province which under Moorish irrigation and rule was the chief granary of Spain, but which has now almost reverted to a natural state, a wild and desolate woodland where no one ever goes and where the peasants seldom see a stranger from one year's end to another. The pigs live with their owners, rooting about the huts, generally tethered by one leg. When the acorns are on the ground they are all turned out on to the hills and woods, going out in herds under the charge of a man and all coming back at night, tearing down the village street, each pig turning into its own shed, as do the goats, without ever making an error. St. Anthony is the patron saint of pigs, and on his day in all the villages of Spain where pigs are kept the priest goes round with holy water with which, for a consideration from their owners, he sprinkles them, so that they may grow specially fat.

I have often wondered on what Spanish goats can possibly live and give the excellent milk they do. They go out in charge of a goat boy in herds to the hills from the towns each morning—those hills that look so rugged and bare that scarcely a

blade of grass can be seen on them, and yet the goats apparently pick up a good living. The Spanish goat is an animal which occasioned an entire revision of my ideas on his species. He is clean-looking and his warm brown coat looks like velvet, quite a different affair from the shaggy, unkempt look the black and white goat gets. The goat in Spain is brushed and groomed and at times the herds are inspected by the Government Department supposed to attend to their welfare in order to ensure complete health and hygiene. Spain has little pasture land, and, except in the north, cows are mainly kept for the purpose of breeding bulls, so the southern portion of the country is greatly dependent on its goats for both milk, butter and cheese.

Here one notices one of the greatest contrasts between north and south. The Basque provinces, Asturias and Santander (where Nestlé has a factory) produce some of the finest butter and milk obtainable, and there are excellent dairies or *vaquerias* in every quarter of Madrid. In Seville, too, there are model dairies where cows' milk and butter can be procured; in Malaga and other southern towns cows' butter is only sold in the salted or preserved form. As well as the butter made from goats' milk there is a special butter made from pig's fat, called *manteca de puerco*. This is coloured yellow and is eaten by the poorer people as butter. It took me quite a long time to realise it was really lard.

The goat is an intelligent animal, and moves to the side of the road when it sees something larger than itself approaching. Not so the pack mule, who will advance boldly in the middle of the road towards a motor car and stand his ground gazing

at the car in stupefaction, without even the glimmer of an idea of stepping aside entering his hard and obstinate head. Not even the violent sounding of the horn moves him, and he apparently cannot locate sound, for he gazes round evidently imagining it comes from behind him. He has to be literally dragged out of the way, or I am sure you might run over him before he would move. More dense still are the pigs ; and I remember a drove we met on our way down the hills not far from Segovia, and the trouble we had with them. Seen in the distance, no one could make out what they were and it was only by their snouts we recognised them when they came nearer. Gaunt, grey, with longish legs and very hairy, my first thought was "Wolves !" But it was impossible for a pack of wolves to be coming down a main road at a hand gallop during a late afternoon in April ! Such a thing could not be, even in Spain ! They apparently intended to charge the car in a body, and pulled up, as the horn sounded, like a huge grey wave right across the road. Nothing would induce them to separate, and on the car slowly approaching they turned and fled before us to return and form up in another grey wave a hundred yards farther down the road. This actually happened five times, and we were becoming desperate, when fortunately a peasant on a mule appeared. He stood behind the grey wave and looked at it. The conversation was something as follows :

"Señores, are these your pigs ?"

"They are not, Señor. Can you help us to get by ?"

"Are you driving them into Segovia ?"

"No Señor ; we desire to pass them."

"Pass, in the name of God." Saying which, he produced from his pocket a volley of stones which he indiscriminately fired into the drove. In a moment a screaming, grunting, grey mass rushed past us. We were free, and with many bows the peasant passed on also.

Segovia rises up on its hill like a great ship ploughing her way through a desert sea ; one of the finest situations of any town I have ever seen. The Alcazar rises up on the edge of the hill, a clean cutting line, at the foot of which runs two streams. I shall never forget it as we saw it in the evening light, the dark mass of rock and then the white turreted battlements on the summit like the prow of one of the famous ships of the Armada.

Segovia is a delightful jumble of narrow old streets, ancient houses and a perfect orgy of churches. Its hotel "of the commerce of Europe" even boasts of a garage, a bathroom *which can be used*, and old-fashioned lofty rooms with heavy furniture of Spanish mahogany. It has very intelligent servants, who grasped the fact that hot water in abundance was a necessity for mad travellers.

The Alcazar delighted me. It is a typical old Castilian castle, probably originally of Roman origin, but restored, strengthened and added to all its possessors. It still looked a fine fortress, with towers, ramparts and drawbridge in excellent preservation. In the Middle Ages the town was the scene of many wars and struggles, the nobility giving allegiance to one king, the people to another. Whole streets barricaded themselves ; churches were turned into fortresses and besieged ; the Alcazar was held by the Royalists and there was fighting everywhere. It was the real school for a

Castilian noble to learn his fighting in, and many knights won their spurs here. The old streets and houses look like it ; in many of the latter the holes are still to be seen where the barricades were driven in. High up on one side are the great rocks, the Peña Grajera, or Crows' Cliff, from which traitors were thrown. In the cathedral is a statue to a woman of Segovia, Maria del Salto, who was hurled over these cliffs, having been found in "flagrante delicto," but who called upon the name of the Virgin and was miraculously saved, it being thus proved that she was innocent.

* In olden days the cathedral adjoined the Alcazar, but this was destroyed when Henry III. moved his court from Madrid to Segovia for a time, and the foundations of the new cathedral were laid on the west side of the Plaza Mayor. This is a magnificent edifice, in the latest Gothic style, with its two rows of chapels between the flying buttresses and its magnificent dome rising some two hundred and twenty feet high. It is one of the few light cathedrals in Spain, probably owing to its late erection and to its magnificent fifteenth century stained glass. Segovia stands so high, however, that it seems in itself to attract all the light and air. The sun gets into the narrowest old streets, and there was certainly more fresh air here than in any other old town in Spain.

Just behind the cathedral is the Plaza Mayor, a peculiarly picturesque square even for Spain. It has clusters of very ancient houses, the upper storeys of which project, with wooden balconies and loggias, which reminded me of the old German town of Rothenburg. We went out after dinner to see this square, and as it was a fiesta the whole

place was decorated and full of people. Coloured shawls, rugs and carpets had been thrown over the balcony rails. They were lit with hanging lamps, and seemed to me full of smiling faces looking down on their friends in the crowd, who threw up flowers to attract their notice or played a few notes on a guitar; indeed, there was music everywhere.

The next morning we went out to look at this fair. I could not understand what it exactly was, but there were lambs and kids and baby turkeys and goslings, so I suppose it was a kind of spring fair of country produce. There was a whole encampment of gipsies, who wandered through, and one boy in a green suit had bars of wood across his shoulders full of tiny osier cages with little birds in them. He looked just like a medieval bird catcher, and I have the strongest suspicion that we ate some of his little birds for dinner that evening!

Here we bought some mule trappings and saddle-bags, very gaily embroidered in colour, one of which has since been made into an excellent work-bag. In these markets or fairs there is always one stall at least with old metal jars, boxes, broken candlesticks, censers and even sometimes ancient weapons. Here we found a fine old pair of Spanish pistols, which were hailed with delight, but which gave us terrible trouble at the frontier later. I felt sure at first they thought we had murdered someone with them, but afterwards we discovered that they only suspected us of having stolen them from some private collection. However, they were a great find when we discovered them in Segovia market,

In the afternoon we went out to see the great

aqueduct called by the inhabitants El Puente, the largest and most important Roman structure now left in Spain. It is believed to date from the time of Augustus, but inscriptions on some of the stone show that it was restored by the Flavians. It begins at the Fuente Fria, or cold fountain, in the Guadarrama Mountains, and winds itself over ten miles of country before it enters the town, spanning the deep valley and towering across the streets till it ends in the Alcazar. It is a wonderful structure of great granite blocks, most wonderfully fitted together without any mortar or clamping, and for quite three hundred yards the arches are in two tiers. It is a conundrum to know how these huge blocks of stone were brought from the quarries in the Guadarrama and hoisted here in arches. The first portion of the aqueduct is open, but when it reaches the reservoir or storage basin, which lies on a hill to the east of Segovia, it runs its remaining nine hundred yards closed. It has one hundred and nineteen arches of different height, the heights varying from twenty four to ninety four feet, according to the surface of the ground. This is one of the sights of Segovia and its inhabitants are justly proud of it.

The whole town is enclosed in old walls, which form a very interesting walk, churches, towers and some of the oldest houses being built into them. One leaves the town by that fine old gate, the Puerta de Santiago, walking round outside the fortifications, and re-enters by the still more ancient city gate, the Puerta de Valladolid, outside of which from the bridge there is one of the most wonderful views of the town.

Don Moyano had given us introductions to a charming old Spanish lady who lived in Segovia,



A STREET IN SEGOVIA
WITH THE AQUEDUCT



THE ALCAZAR, SEGOVIA

and after dinner on the second night we went to see her. She had an apartment in one of the houses which stood near the cathedral, and from her wooden loggia we could see far over the plain. There was no moon, not many stars, but somehow one seemed able to see for miles. I cannot understand how it is one sees so far across country at night in Spain, but it is a very beautiful sight, and is something so new to me that I would have been more than content to sit there and look at it ; but our hostess wished to talk. She was horrified to hear we had seen no churches but the cathedral. "It is terrible," she kept saying. "Segovia has nineteen churches as well as the cathedral and you have seen none of them !" Had it not been so late I am sure she would have insisted on taking us then and there to see them all ; and she begged us to remain one more day. It was well worth it ! The man of the party protested that he simply could not look at another church. "I have seen hundreds and hundreds of churches since we came to Spain," he began "and—" (here his wife fortunately managed to give him a hearty kick) "one was more beautiful than the other," he lamely finished.

We assured our hostess that we really were obliged to leave quite early the next morning, but begged her to tell us about Castile instead. She was full of stories, but they were mostly about churches. "As long as we don't have to go and see them," the poor man began ; but we managed to keep him quiet.

The old lady was a keen churchwoman, and knew every chapel, relic and saint in Segovia. She was particularly interesting about the Convent of the Carmelites, where the head and bones of

that great Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross, are kept.

He was the spiritual adviser of Sta. Teresa, and he it was who wrote those wonderful mystic poems: "En una noche oscura," the "Subida del Monte Carmelo," and "Llama de Amor Viva." Our hostess knew them all, and finding we were interested and could understand, recited them to us. It was a wonderful experience, sitting on that balcony in the dim light and hearing the soft Spanish voice repeating the wonder words of the "dark night," most lovely and mystical of poems. On just such a night St. John of the Cross must have written it, possibly in that very town itself.

That memory is worth all the rest of Segovia to me.

CHAPTER XVII

VALLADOLID AND BURGOS

The road from Segovia to Valladolid is a good road as roads go in Spain, but, again, the dust was terrible. We were running through the great plateau of Old Castile, and it was just too late. A couple of months earlier it would have been in great beauty—a blue sea of iris; now it was sandy and burnt.

I adore wide open views, and this rolling plain with its shifting shadows was a study in browns, ochres, yellows and reds. The "painted desert" of Arizona is not more vividly coloured than this grand plateau, but the painter here has only certain colours on his palette. They are living and fierce, and everything tones in. Stretch after stretch of crimson lucerne in full flower, then warm, grey-green rocks splashed with yellow lichen, then more crimson, and, as far off as one can see, the yellow-brown plain, vibrating with sun and air, stretching away into the distance.

I have a theory that these great desert plains hold mysterious secrets for those who can understand them, just as does the sea; but to no one who does not love their wide vistas will they reveal their secret meaning; and even those who love them must diligently seek and serve before they understand these mysteries.

There is something in the eyes of the people who love sweeping unlimited views over the ocean

and the desert—a far-away free look one never finds in the eyes of mountain lovers.

A writer whose name I cannot remember once said that nothing really satisfied some eyes but the sea or the desert ; and I am sure he is right. One may feast one's eyes on beauty and almost content them with colour—especially with blue colour—but there is a hunger of sight which must wait unsatisfied till the eyes fulfil themselves with space. What is it, I wonder, that is so calming and satisfying in a wide unrestricted view? Is it because of the limitless horizon, the far far stretch with nothing breaking it till desert and sky meet, and no one can say just where the meeting is, or is it the perpetual movement—shadows of clouds, the mystery of wind bending fields of grain—the strange shiver in reeds and rushes along the river banks? There is as much movement on a plain as in the sea, and perhaps it is this perpetual movement which rests you because it lays before your eyes a restlessness neither disturbing nor distressing ; the gentle living movement of nature, which does not fret nor destroy, but is content to move and change quietly and persistently for ever.

We lunched on the ruins of an old castle, which one day must have been a fortress ; it was just off the road, standing on a rocky piece of high ground, and nothing was left but the broken walls, the inside floor of levelled rock and the remains of a watch-tower at each corner. I sat on the wall and ate my sandwiches and watched the colours change on the plain as the shadows of the clouds swept across it—I could have watched it for hours and hours, but I was only allowed twenty minutes ; we had to hurry on and reach Valladolid by the evening.

On this journey we had one of those strange little experiences which makes one realise that the clock in Spain has been set back a hundred and fifty years.

The road is easy to find, but between Olmedo and Valladolid we were not quite sure if it were the right road, and asked a peasant coming towards us.

“Señor, is this the road to Valladolid?”

“No, Señores,” he answered, “this is the road to Olmedo,”

We were quite certain he was wrong, as we had passed Olmedo an hour previously. Another peasant was asked, and again he assured us that this road did not lead to Valladolid, but to Olmedo. “Have we turned back round some turning,” we wondered, but trusting to an indifferent map and a chauffeur with a good bump of locality we went on to arrive safely at Valladolid. Then the mystery was explained by the hotel-keeper, who told us that the road is always going, according to the peasant’s view, to *his* objective. Thus all the peasants we asked were going from Valladolid to Olmedo, so the road did not go to Valladolid but to Olmedo.

Valladolid has many claims to historical honour! Anne of Austria was born here, as were Philip II. and IV. of Spain. Pedro the Cruel, forced for reasons of State, married his wretched wife Blanche de Bourbon here, leaving her three days later to return to Seville and his beloved Maria Padilla. A more fortunate marriage was that of Ferdinand and Isabella, which was celebrated here with great pomp and ceremony. Indeed, Valladolid was a favourite residence with the Spanish sovereigns, and contested with Madrid

the honour of being capital of the country. Apart from royalty, many famous men lived here. In a queer old house behind the Campo Grande, Cervantes wrote the major part of *Don Quixote*. The Plaza Mayor of Valladolid ran with the blood of martyrs and heretics, who gave up their lives in the terrible *autos-da-fé* organised by Isabella's masterful confessor, Torquemada, who founded here the Dominican Convent of San Pablo, that ferocious ecclesiastic who bound his queen by a terrible oath that she would devote her life to the extirpation of heresy for the glory of God and the exaltation of the Catholic Faith.

Christopher Columbus ended his days here in poverty and neglect, and the house in which he died is still shown. At the end of the Campo Grande is the national monument to Columbus, where the great man kneels with the figure of Spain holding a cross and a chalice behind him. The story of Columbus is well known, but the history of those early years of struggle to make his great belief in the New World known and to obtain a patron to finance him for his great adventure always seems to me one of the most pathetic in history. Columbus was born in Genoa, and life in that great port fired him, even as a boy, with love of the sea, and he became a sailor at the age of fourteen. In those spacious days sailors were always soldiers too; their boats carried guns; pikes and cutlasses were the weapons with which they were armed; it was a hard school! At thirty-five years of age he found himself in Lisbon, married to a Portuguese lady, and he had already become famous as a maker of charts and maps. He had unlimited courage and a vivid imagination. He was quite certain that beyond the Azores far

across the Atlantic lay some land, of which returning mariners told fables. Dimly he knew of Japan, and after much study he became convinced that the earth was round, and believed therefore that if he sailed far enough he would come to Japan, touching many islands on the way. But it does not seem treasure or fame alone that tempted him. He was a religious man, and burned to rescue Jerusalem from the Turks.

"These unknown realms," he wrote in his diary, "are peopled by immortal beings, for whom Christ has died. It is my mission to search them out and to carry to them the gospel of salvation. Wealth will also flow in from this discovery. With this we can raise armies and rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the infidel."

But much money was necessary for the fitting-out of such an expedition. He appealed to the Portuguese Government, and actually got an audience with King John II. Both the Government and the king were impressed with Columbus' plans. They listened carefully to them, and discouraged him by saying he wished for too much for himself. (He demanded that he should be appointed viceroy of any realms he should discover and receive one-tenth of the profits.) And then they treacherously fitted out an expedition themselves, using the charts Columbus had marked and fitting out the expedition according to his own ideas. It is gratifying to know that this treachery resulted in complete failure. On hearing of it Columbus shook the dust of Portugal off his feet in disgust and, his wife being dead, took his son back to Genoa, where he tried to interest the Genoese Government in his schemes, but they simply laughed at him and refused even to discuss it.

But Columbus had the heart of a lion. Nothing would induce him to give up, and he determined to try Spain ; and set sail with his little son, landing at Palos. Here he heard that the Catholic kings were at Cordoba, and he actually set out to walk there. He stayed overnight at a monastery, the prior of which was so struck by his bearing and learning that he listened attentively to his schemes, took charge of his little son, and even gave him a letter recommending him to Queen Isabella's confessor.

It was months and months before he gained his desired interview, and again it was months and months before he could convince the conference called by the king to examine his statements that there was anything in them. Then the Church stepped in, saying it was a heresy to suggest such a thing that the world was round, which was against the teaching of the Bible. Indeed, this statement almost wrecked the whole plan ; the sovereigns were wholly engrossed in ridding the country of the Moors ; the court was like a fighting camp ; there was no money ; no one had time for anything but war. Columbus turned from one high ecclesiastic to another, from one great noble to another, but all in vain, and at last he decided to seek his fortunes in France. He had been seven years trying to reach the ear of the Catholic kings ! He went to the convent to take leave of his son, and the prior again befriended him. This wise priest was shocked at the idea of the discovery of the new world—which Columbus was more than ever certain existed—being lost to his country and going to France, and sent a private letter to the queen, imploring her to intervene. He appealed to her as Queen of Castile, an appeal she could never

resist, and to this she immediately responded. Columbus was sent for, but again it seemed that his own expectations would block his way. The queen listened to his story, and was interested, but to make him viceroy over everything he discovered and to give him one-tenth of the profits seemed to her enormous, and she attempted to compromise. Columbus was weary of waiting, would make no abatement, and actually departed on his mule. Isabella, thinking it over, was horrified to think of the possible glory of such a discovery going to France, and sent for her husband to discuss the matter instantly. Ferdinand was entirely against it, pointing out that they had spent everything on war, and had no money for such adventures. But the glory of the idea had fired the queen and she decided to finance it herself, undertaking the enterprise for her kingdom of Castile. She pledged her own private jewels to raise the necessary money. Everyone knows the rest of the story. From then on began the great adventure, the reward of the many many years of waiting. But the end was sadder even than the beginning, and I can never quite forgive the Catholic kings their neglect and callous treatment of this great man. During the last two years of his life Columbus lived in Valladolid, and here is his description of his life, written in a letter to his son :

“ I live by borrowing ; little have I profited by twenty years of service with such toils and perils, since at present I do not own a roof in Spain. If I desire to eat or sleep I have no resource but an inn, and for the most times I have not the wherewithal to pay my bill.”

Valladolid was the heart of the great school of wood-carving in Spain. There lived Juan de

Juni, whose wooden statue of the dead Christ is one of the most extraordinary and realistic carvings known. Here lived, too, that great genius Alonso Berruguete, and his work is represented in the museum here by the wonderful altar-piece carved by him for the Church of San Benito, and also by some of the choir stalls in the same church. But his most wonderful work is the wonderful silleria in Toledo Cathedral, over which he is said to have spent more than thirty years. Another great wood-carver was Gregorio Hernandez, whose fine crucifix is in this collection as well as a statue of St. Teresa. Then there is Andrés de Nájera, a wood-carver of great delicacy and marvellous imagination, and in one of the churches here—San Miguel, I think—there is a carved reredos in wood by Gaspar Becarra, which alone is worth going to Valladolid to see.

In order to understand Spanish art it is not only necessary to have thoroughly grasped the country and its scenery, but one must have made a close and serious study of the Spanish character. Form means far more than colour to a Spaniard, and consequently sculpture, carvings, architecture, satisfy their artistic sense more completely than any painting. Sculpture was most deeply ingrained in both the primitive Iberians and the Visigoths, and is a natural expression of Spanish art, not only in stone, but particularly in wood. They have carried it to great perfection. There are very few Spanish churches which have not some fine wood-carvings; most of them have magnificent choir stalls, the detail of which is remarkable. The wood used is generally walnut, and the masters in this art have thoroughly understood

how to make the very most out of the rich warm colouring, and their modelling of expressive faces, of elaborate drapery, of hands and feet, is brought to a perfection one sees nowhere else. There is an altar screen in one of the chapels in the cathedral at Burgos which everyone at first believes to be ivory, but which is really pearwood, that hardest of all woods, and in this case so light in tone that the mistake is at first excusable. The carving of the altar stalls in Toledo, Barcelona, indeed, in all the principal cathedrals, repays long detailed study. From as early as the sixth century the Spaniards made a close study of forest and animal life and were able to picture in wood hunting scenes, forest pictures, the life of birds and animals and plants in a remarkably realistic way. Their imagination was rich, and they combined with these natural forms imps and satyrs, fauns, nymphs, dwarfs and demons in a remarkable fashion. The carvings of woodland scenes (though these are in stone) on the doors and windows of the Lonja in Valencia are complete little forest stories, which one can follow out in different little scenes. The bottom panel of the door starts on the left side with a boar hunt, and one can follow this in different square panels right round: the huntsman with his dogs arousing the boar—his flight—his taking cover—the boar again being attacked in the open—then fighting for his life—attacking his enemies, and finally his death. One goes with the hunted animal right through the forest, sees the startled birds flying in fear, watches tiny animals scurrying away for safety; you see the broken boughs, torn up roots, as the boar sharpens his tusks; strange little monkey-like animals, imps and natural forest beasts—the

squirrel, the fox, the badger—peep down from high branches and round tree trunks to watch the hunt. Every single detail is shown just as it would happen, and each little figure is complete in itself; you could pick it out of the panel and it would stand alone—a perfect little gem of carving. All this happens to be in stone, but there are equally rich carvings in wood and equally interesting stories can be followed out on the cathedral stalls, where scenes in the lives of the saints are depicted with extraordinary detail. The hands and feet are exquisitely carved, the veins and muscles shewing, and the expression of the faces, even in the small figures, being remarkable.

In the larger figures this becomes quite uncanny. There are some large sculptured wooden figures in one of the churches in Valladolid which are extraordinarily fine. But it is in the coloured wood-carvings that this art surpasses itself in Spain. A head will be carved—life-size—and it would appear that any expression can be faithfully portrayed—anguish, delight, sadness, astonishment; each as naturally done as the others. The face is then delicately coloured, a hood of soft wool is thrown over it, and you have an apparently living face! In the head of Our Lady of the Victories, in the Church of El Cristo de la Victoria, in Malaga, the completely life-like expression of the Virgin's face is wonderful. She looks down upon the Child, her eyelids drooping, her mouth smiling, a perfectly natural human face! Again, in the little side chapel in this church is a wonderful head of Our Lady, in anguish, the head slightly turned, the eyelids swollen and stained with weeping, and a most pitiful mouth. As one looks at it one almost expects the lips to tremble. I have never

seen anyone look at this statue without tears immediately coming into their eyes. It is an absolute presentment of intense but very quiet and controlled grief. One feels ashamed—somehow—of having looked at any face in such extreme anguish, and one's instinct is to turn away and not intrude, for at first it is difficult to credit the fact that it is a statue.

These heads are both in wood, coloured in a most natural and subdued manner.

Pages and pages could be written about the carved tombs and retables, or altar-screens, and the choir stalls, which are to be seen all over Spain. The choir is generally set in Spain in the centre of the church, a railed passage leading from it to the high altar. Thus both on the outside and inside of the choir ample space is provided for carvings, of which full advantage is taken.

The Moors taught the Spaniards the fine art of embroidering in stone, and they immediately used this for the decoration of their churches, cathedrals and cloisters. This shews more geometrical design—arabesques, endless patterns and the same pattern repeated with slight differences. A well-known architect once likened the Moorish designs of fretted windows and screens in the Alhambra to Scarlatti's music,—the same theme several times played over—the same theme again, but very slightly changed played again many times—then the first arrangement repeated. This excellently describes the designs of the beautiful ajimez windows and the bands of almocarabes; that Moorish pattern of ornament which repeats itself with slight variations again and again.

In metal, as well as in stone and wood, the Spanish love of form expresses itself with equal

success. Many of the churches have ironwork screens ; those in Seville and Toledo, for instance, being amongst the finest examples of ironwork known. In balconies, window railing and the huge iron gates that enclose the inner courtyards of old Moorish and Spanish houses this art is to be seen worked out in great beauty, and if lace could be made in stone we have here the most exquisite tracery of feathery leaves and waving grasses.

When one comes to painting there is tremendous diversity of opinion, and the greatest critics agree that Spain is not a land of great painters, and almost all the celebrated Spanish artists have been enormously under the influence of the Flemish, Dutch, Venetian or Tuscan Schools.

From the very first in Spain painting was considered as an art intended for the decoration of cathedrals, churches, and monasteries, and Velazquez's great master, Pacheco, constantly impressed upon his pupils that "We are here only for the glory of God, and the chief end of art is to persuade men to piety and to raise them to God," and in his treatise on the art of painting he actually holds up Luis de Vargae as a wonderful example of the true artist, who constantly went to confession, received the sacraments, and who spent a certain portion of each day in religious meditation, composing his life with the constant contemplation of his death. The deep-seated seriousness and intense religious emotion of the Spaniard has made his peculiar character ; and *character*, much more than *art*, is typical of Spain and appeals far more to the nation. The gaily clad smiling Madonnas, who often look like pretty peasant girls, of Italy are unknown in Spain. There is always something serious and thoughtful in the face of Our Lady as pictured by

a Spaniard. Even when shewn as smiling it is a wistful and pathetic smile.

Spaniards, from their constant contemplation of death, never shrank from the most sordid and realistic presentations of life, which was but the preparation for death, and thus we have those pictures of beggars full of sores, halt and lame, the bishop and knight of Valdés Leal rotting in their coffins (the picture before which Murillo held his nose), Zurbaran's monk gazing in meditation at a skull, Ribera's martyrs with their bodies torn open in torture and Goya's extraordinary picture of a cannibal eating a woman. Murillo has somehow escaped this, but he was a southerner, with the sunny Andalusian temperament. In the Seville collection of his pictures he shows us that "golden ecstasy," as it has been called, which culminates in his delicious little angels, who look really alive, and in the warmth of colouring and natural poses of the Virgin. Over and over again he paints these delicious children, and his presentation of the Holy Child is satisfying and complete. His fascinating beggar boys are to be seen in his pictures in the Prado, those of Seville being mainly the pictures painted for the great Franciscan convent there.

Murillo is supposed to have moulded himself on Ribera, a Valencian, who went later to Italy, but except in a few solitary instances there is very little similarity in their work. Ribera's conception was essentially Spanish, but his colouring was the colouring of Italy.

The glory of the Prado is undoubtedly the superb collection of Velazquez, that truly great artist, who re-discovered the art of painting, as it is said, and who certainly portrayed Spanish life, apart from its religious aspect, as no other artist has done.

His father was a Portuguese; his family was evidently a wealthy one, for he was able to take up the life of an artist, studying in the great Italian schools and in the Netherlands, and eventually became court painter to Philip IV. of Spain, painting the king and queen and all the members of the royal family again and again. He was given an apartment in the royal palace, and from then on he painted picture after picture of those ugly royalties whose heavy dull features it was his misfortune to be obliged to portray. But his art did not suffer, but rather increased by reason of this. Indeed, he appears to have risen beyond being influenced either by ugliness or beauty; he painted with that special Spanish seriousness and gravity an exact presentment of what he saw—a hideous dwarf, a narrow-minded ecclesiastic, the melancholy king, an ugly woman, or those children of the royal house in their extraordinary robes, every line and detail being faithfully reproduced. No painter repays careful study more than Velazquez. Indeed, without that his great genius cannot be appreciated or understood.

From Valladolid to Burgos there is a good broad road with an indifferent surface, and we jolted over it rather sadly, for we were nearing the end of our journey. Just before one enters the town one comes to one of the greatest convents in Spain, Las Huelgas, the Cistercian convent, founded in 1180 by Alfonso VIII. and Queen Eleanor, for women of noble family. This was one of those celebrated convents where the abbess was often of royal blood and exercised extraordinary powers. She had the right of hanging offenders on her own gallows and had also the right of judging by all of the three

laws, the high law, the middle law, the lower law. She could, indeed, condemn her enemies to be hung, drawn and quartered if she liked, and apparently she often liked in those ancient days.

The nuns are not called sisters, but Señoras doñas. Nowadays the Abbess of Las Huelgas is one of the great ladies of Spain, appears constantly at court, and has still great authority. The convent has lovely gardens and cloisters, and in the church are the kneeling statues of its founders. There is some very fine tapestry and ancient banners, and the whole community is very wealthy, giving away much in charity and good works. It is to this convent that the ladies of the nobility in Spain retire for rest and retreats, sometimes living in the furnished apartments for three or four months at a time before returning to the gaiety of the capital. The Burgos Cathedral dates from the same time as this convent, and is a most inspiring church. It stands on hilly ground, which slopes slightly up on one side, making it look as though the cathedral had grown out of a hill. The towers and steeples are quite beautiful, the latter of fretted stonework, showing how well the Spaniards learnt their lesson of making lace in stone. This cathedral was built under the auspices of an English bishop, and, like most of the cathedrals in northern Spain is built on the French pattern—a Latin cross, which has been altered by subsequent chapels. It had originally some of the finest stained glass in the country, but this was destroyed during the war of independence, and excepting for the beautiful estrellon, or rose window, over the central door, all the glass is white. There are fifteen chapels, the first one which I saw being the Chapel of the Sacred Christ, holding that

very ancient image of Christ which was supposed to be a real human body, dried and preserved, with real hair and such a terrible expression that I could go into no other chapel, but sat in the cloisters and watched the swallows building in the arches.

Whatever one feels about religion, no one can deny that the Spanish churches are steeped in a strange mystical atmosphere which impresses itself on the most casual visitor. There are no crowds of tourists being shown round by a guide ; they are never made into show places, and the sense of worship never leaves them ; they are quiet and still, giving rest and refreshment by that very stillness.

Burgos was the home of that most famous conquistador, the Cid ; at least, he was born at the wretched village of Vivar, some five miles out of the town. He took his name, Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, from this hamlet, and his sobriquet, the Cid comes from the Arab Sidi, or lord, which reminds me that no one travelling in Spain will hear any of his adventures and exploits (beside which the adventures of Baron Munchhausen entirely fade away), if they ask about the Cid, pronouncing the word as it is spelt. Only a Spaniard can pronounce his name correctly, which sounds something like "Thith," and it took me a long while to find out about whom I was being told. I had almost come to believe in some new hero, of whom I had never heard, till, recognising some of the stories, I asked that the name might be written, and lo, it appeared as my old friend, the Cid.

It must have been wonderful to live in those old spacious times, when half the world was still to be discovered, and stately ladies and gallant knights

lived and loved and sung and died ! It must have been strange to dress always in brocaded robes, to wear coronets of gold or head-dresses stiff with jewels ; to be riveted into armour which weighed nearly a ton and from which no man could get out until his servitors unriveted him. Most strange of all must it have been to live in cold stone castles with no means of communication ! to wait months to hear the result of a battle fought a few hundred miles away ; to be utterly unaware of the fate of husband and sons who had fought in it. The women of those days had dull and wearisome lives, but for the men they must have been full of adventure and vivid life.

The Cid was certainly a wonderful man. King Alfonso VI. gave him his sister, Ximena, to wife, and the Cid served him faithfully, though he *did* force the king to swear an oath to preserve the rights of the people before ascending the throne. This oath—the famous Jura en Santa Gadea—was administered to the king by the Bishop of Burgos, in the presence of the whole court, including the Cid, in the Church of Santa Agueda in Burgos, and the king was obliged to swear the oath three times, firstly by the Cross, at the entrance ; then by the bolt of the door, and lastly by the Gospels on the high altar.

The bolt of the door on which the oath was taken is still preserved, and can be seen in the church. The Cid conquered many towns for his royal master. He rode by his side at the triumphal entrance into Toledo ; he became himself Governor of Valencia ; and even after his death his body had strange adventures. It was laid by his wish in the monastery of Cardona first of all ; it was transported to various other places, even travelling to Germany, for the Spaniards had a mania for

moving dead bodies about. At last it came to rest in the Chapel of the Ayuntamiento, at Burgos.

We left Burgos early in the morning, and the heart of the chauffeur grew obviously lighter and lighter with every mile towards the north, as mine grew heavier and heavier at the thought of leaving Spain. Soon after Burgos we left the plain, too, and got into the hills. It had rained here, and we passed pools of water—water with a kind of coloured darkness in it; the shadow of the mountains—black and purple and dark, steely grey.

There were more trees and brisk-looking peasants.

"This isn't like Spain any more," someone said; and I suddenly realised we had really left Spain with Burgos and the hot sunny plain.

Time, which one overcomes in Spain, had started for us again; that restless unsettled northern feeling of hurry fell upon us all, and I was glad that the car went swiftly—a slow parting is unbearable.

At San Sebastian, where we spent the last night, a smart-looking chambermaid brought me hot water, and I wondered curiously if she could be Spanish.

"Madame is tired?" she asked in French.

"I am sorry to leave your country," I answered. "I feel happy and at home in it."

Suddenly she smiled and looked so Spanish that I wondered I could ever have doubted her nationality.

"The Señora will return," she said, in her own tongue. "For Spain draws back everyone who loves her; Vaya Usted con Dios."

I never saw her again, but in the morning there was a carnation on my breakfast tray.

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